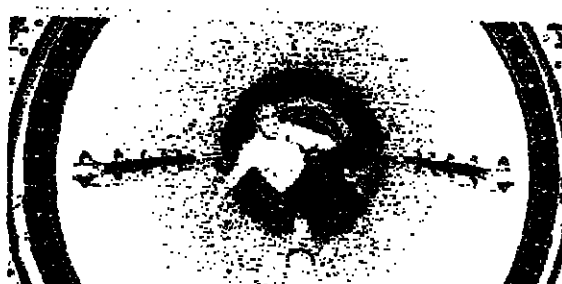


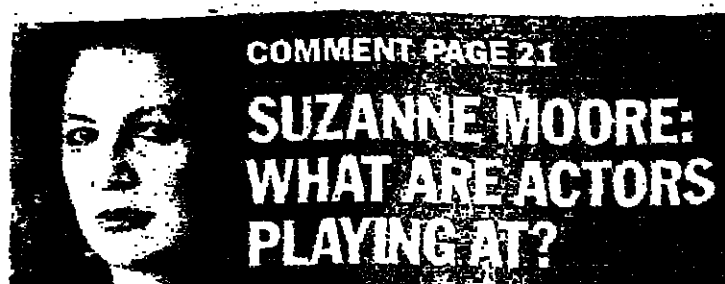
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SPACE



COMMENT PAGE 21

SUZANNE MOORE:
WHAT ARE ACTORS
PLAYING AT?

The end of a grubby affair

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

In a report that concludes one of the most shameful and grubby episodes in recent British politics, Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, found two former Tory ministers guilty of taking envelopes stuffed with cash for asking questions in the Commons.

The long-awaited 900-page report by Sir Gordon had been ready for publication before the general election, but was delayed by John Major's decision to prorogue Parliament early. It turns out to be particularly damning about the behaviour of two former ministers, Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith, as well as being highly critical of three other ex-MPs.

Of Mr Hamilton, the former corporate affairs minister, Sir Gordon says that he "received cash payments directly from [Mohamed] al Fayed [the owner of Harrods] for lobbying services in connection with the bid to acquire the company." Mr Smith, too, accepted cash payments from Mr Fayed of between £18,000 and £25,000. Sir Gordon concludes that Mr Smith's conduct "has to be seen as a disingenuous attempt at concealment".

The two former ministers reacted very differently. Mr Hamilton, unrepentant, said he was "disappointed, devastated, perplexed and amazed" at the report's findings. But Mr Smith, who resigned just before the election as Tory candidate for Beaconsfield, said: "I am very sorry that my conduct fell well below the standards expected of MPs. I can only say in my defence that it seemed less obvious at the time than it does with the benefit of hindsight what was the right course of action to take."

Martin Bell, the independent MP who defeated Mr Hamilton in the safe Tory constituency of Tatton, said the report vindicated his decision to stand in the seat. The BBC also confirmed last night that Mr Hamilton was still asking for cash for questions by demanding £50 to do interviews.



Unrepentant: Neil and Christine Hamilton in Westminster yesterday after reading the Downey report
Photograph: Brian Harris

West seat, was found by Sir Gordon to have received undisclosed payments of cash from Ian Greer, the lobbyist. He was also found to have "misled a select committee of MPs" and "persistently failed to declare his interests in dealings with ministers".

Sir Andrew Bowden, who lost Brighton Kemptown in May, "failed to declare interests in dealings with ministers and officials over the House of Fraser", and in one case "gave a misleading explanation" for his lobbying. He also failed to register a donation to his election campaign.

Michael Brown, who lost Cleethorpes, "persistently and deliberately" failed to declare his lobbying interest for a tobacco firm when dealing with ministers and officials.

Sir Peter Hordern, who stood down at Horsham, was only mildly rebuked for having broken the spirit of the rules but was cleared of accepting cash for questions. Four other ex-MPs who received money from Mr Fayed were exonerated: Norman Lamont, Lady Olga Maitland, Gerry Malone, and Nijm Deen. Sir Gordon also said that the rules governing the registration of election donations should be reviewed.

The former MPs have two weeks in which to challenge the findings of the report and then it will be up to the 11 members of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee to decide what action to take. As the men concerned are all now out of Parliament, possible sanctions are limited but the committee could theoretically recommend to Parliament that they send them to prison or ban them from standing for election. However, one source close to the committee said: "They will never get back into public life. That is sufficient punishment."

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Leading article, page 19

Clinton begs for Ulster compromise

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

President Clinton last night made an 11th hour appeal to Loyalists and Nationalists to avoid a disastrous confrontation in Drumcree at the weekend, as Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, grappled with the agonising decision over whether to let the Orange men's march go ahead.

With that decision hanging on a knife edge, the Ulster Secretary last night flew to Belfast for last minute talks with Lt-General Rupert Smith, the General Officer commanding British

troops in the Province, and Ronnie Flanagan, the Chief Constable of the RUC, about the risks of a bloody confrontation on Sunday, if the march is allowed to go ahead.

A decision could be announced today, but Ms Mowlam is expected to allow the residents of the Garvaghy Road in Portadown and the Orangemen more time to consider the appeal by President Clinton for restraint, and for a compromise to be reached.

"There have been very strong rumours that she will force it through, but no decision has been taken either way. She has

made it clear it is for the RUC chief constable to advise. If he decides it should be banned, she has the power to do so, but if he decides it should go ahead, she will support him," said one Government source.

Ms Mowlam earlier attended the first talks at Downing Street between Bertie Ahern, the new Irish Taoiseach, and Tony Blair, who also recognised that last hopes of securing a ceasefire from the IRA could rest on the outcome of the Drumcree impasse. Mr Ahern and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ray Burke, upset Unionists in Belfast earlier this

week when they called for the march to be banned. "They are worried about the security breaking down, and civil war breaking out, but we have had civil war for a generation," said one Ulster Unionist MP.

Downing Street sources said the meeting was positive, and Mr Ahern praised the "tireless" efforts of Ms Mowlam to reach a compromise in Drumcree, but there were clear signs of tensions between Dublin and London over the decision. "They stated their position and we wanted them to understand the difficulty we have," said a Whitehall source.

Mr Ahern said it would be a "retrograde step" to use troops to force the march along Garvaghy Road past Drumcree Church through the predominantly Catholic area of Portadown, where tensions were rising on the front line. "We have to try to de-escalate the tension, understanding the protests of one side and the traditions of another," said Mr Ahern. "If it goes wrong, nerves will be tested, including my own."

Calling for "generosity" to be shown on both sides, the Irish Prime Minister cautioned against allowing the Drumcree confrontation to destroy the

peace process, in which he is supporting Mr Blair in insisting that the IRA must declare a ceasefire before they can join the talks, which are due to resume in September.

The Government broke off contacts with Sinn Féin after the killing of two policemen by the IRA, but officials have confirmed that Sinn Féin has sent the Government a note asking for clarification of the joint Anglo-Irish statement, and the Government is in touch with Sinn Féin through some form of contacts with officials. "We are aware of their general attitude," said the source.



Tim Henman after losing to Michael Stich in the quarter-final at Wimbledon yesterday. Photograph: David Ashdown

British tennis falls back to earth

Clare Garner

The sun set on Britain's hopes of a home grown finalist at Wimbledon this year at 5.44pm yesterday.

The fact that the "Greg v Tim" T-shirts had sold out to expectant spectators that morning said it all. The fans had been counting their Brits before they were hatched.

Henmania was history - and as the crestfallen crowd filed out of the stadium they took refuge in another national obsession - the weather.

While Greg Rusedski, who lost 4-6, 6-4, 4-6, 3-6 to the unseeded Frenchman Cedric Pioline, could have been demoralised by the poor turn

out of fans for his match, Henman could have no such grievance. For everyone was well aware that Michael Stich, the German former champion who has announced his retirement, had nothing to lose and Henman, who would have become the first Briton to make the semi-finals since 1973 - four years before he was born - had everything to play for.

Before the match Stich had said that, while one could always be certain that in football the German would pull through when it came to the crunch, the same could not be said of tennis. But yesterday it never came to the crunch. Any parallel with the highly charged Euro 96 shoot out was redundant.

Rather, it seemed that Stich had a clear passage.

He greeted the final score 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 by chucking his towels to the crowd. The Union Jack wavers were the first to reach out and grab them.

The British were indeed a fickle bunch yesterday. In the morning Rusedski was championed as their own but once he lost the fans were quick to disown him. As one steward remarked: "If he had won he'd have been British, now that he's been knocked out he isn't British any more."

When Rusedski walked on to the court at 11.03am only one third of the 11,500 seats were occupied. An hour later the court was only half full. The reasons

given were various. A spokesman for the All England Tennis Club said: "We like the place to be humming but people have to make their own arrangements and we can't influence people to get here."

Boris Becker, three times the Wimbledon champion, will not be returning to the Championships. The German was beaten 6-1, 6-7, 6-1, 6-4 by Pete Sampras in the quarter-finals yesterday and announced it was his last match at the All England Club.

"That's it for me," he said. "My last time at Wimbledon. I think it's a good moment for me to go. I just don't feel I have what it takes to win a Grand Slam any more."

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Burton quits Burma
The Burton Group said it was severing its links with Burma yesterday, just before a *Newsnight* documentary was due to document its ties to the country. Page 14

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Government in Lords defeat over Referendums Bill

The Government last night suffered its first defeat in the Lords, when Tory peers forced a change in the Referendums Bill to require the referendums in Scotland and Wales to be held on the same day.

The defeat, by 101 to 94, a majority of seven, during the committee stage of the Bill could be overturned when it returns to the Commons but that would risk delay, which the Government can ill afford. The referendums are due to be held in September.

It put a hole in the Government's strategy for building up momentum to encourage a "yes" vote in Wales. The Government wanted to hold the Welsh referendum after the Scots had voted on a Scottish Parliament, and it may decide to overturn the Lords' decision, when the Bill returns to the Commons.

The defeat will also fuel demands for an early move by the Government to end the rights of hereditary peers to vote in the Lords. Tories had so far been restrained in using their dominance of the House in the face of Labour's pledge to abolish hereditary peers' voting rights.

Colin Brown

Cleared prison chief resigns

The chief executive of Ashworth top security hospital has quit her job even though an independent inquiry gave her the all-clear, it emerged today.

Janice Miles, 48, was suspended from her post on 7 February after the then Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell announced the investigation into alleged paedophile activities and drug abuse at the complex in Maghull on Merseyside.

The hospital authority had ordered its own inquiry into the allegations and it put Mrs Miles, who joined the hospital as general manager in 1993, in the clear. Mrs Miles still intends to give evidence to the judicial inquiry, which begins in November after preliminary hearings in August and October.

Jojo Moyes

BA cabin crew consider strike offer

Leaders of 9,000 British Airways cabin crew were last night considering proposals from the airline aimed at averting a three-day strike beginning next Wednesday. While stewards and stewardesses were protesting over the imposition of a new pay structure, talks continued between the airline and representatives of 9,000 ground staff who are threatening industrial action in a separate dispute over the sell-off of the catering division.

Meanwhile, Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic yesterday unveiled the airline's new logo (pictured) — the Union Flag which BA dropped from the tailplanes of its aircraft last month. The new logo, which will appear at the front of Virgin aircraft, was unveiled on a Boeing 747 at Heathrow airport.

Barrie Clement



Lord Irvine helps blind magistrates

A long-standing campaign for blind people to be allowed to serve as magistrates paid off yesterday as Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, announced he was seeking to appoint a pilot complement of six over the next 12 months.

The move was welcomed by the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Chairman John Wall, the only blind person in Britain to hold part-time judicial office in pre-trial High Court hearings, said: "Blind people can judge as well as their sighted peers, especially as they will not be distracted by irrelevant considerations such as a person's appearance."

Patricia Wynn Davies

Channel 5 plans major relaunch

Channel 5 is preparing for a major programming and advertising relaunch in September. Dawn Airey, the channel's programming director, has confirmed that the "stripped and stranded" format of her shows will be watered down and a number will be scrapped or radically rejigged in the autumn.

There will also be a fresh marketing campaign to encourage people to tune in to the channel because another swathe of transmitters will be turned on in September. Both the programme relaunch and marketing push are timed to coincide with the increased viewing all television gets in the autumn.

Paul McCann

Builders' threat to Opera House

Leaders of 40,000 construction workers yesterday threatened indefinite strikes at prestige projects including the Tate Gallery, Royal Opera House and the Millennium Dome in a dispute over pay.

The target sites, which also include the Newbury Bypass and the Channel Tunnel Rail-Link, could be hit by stoppages from 5 August, and plans drawn up by the Transport and General Workers Union and the GMB general union.

The Construction Confederation, the employers' group, is seeking a long term agreement on pay of up to four years, although unions are now attempting to thrash out a deal for this year.

Barrie Clement

End of the road for Ladas

Russian-built Lada cars have finally reached the end of the road in Britain. It was confirmed yesterday. Seventy jobs will be lost at the company's Humberside import centre after a rescue attempt failed.

No more new cars will be imported, but Lada owners, thought to number about 100,000, will still get parts and servicing through UK dealers. Often the butt of jokes, the Lada has actually proved quite popular in Britain since it went on sale in 1973.

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people



Mrs Parker Bowles: PR professionals are said to be advising her and the Prince of Wales

TV plays role in campaign to rehabilitate Camilla

A Camilla Parker Bowles propaganda campaign will hit something of a peak this weekend, with the broadcast of a sympathetic documentary about the Prince of Wales's "special friend" on Channel 5, and an episode of BBC1's *Heart of the Matter* exploring the implications for the Church of England of a marriage between the two.

According to the maker of the Channel 5 documentary, Mrs Parker Bowles's biographer, Christopher Wilson, the film was made against the wishes of the Prince's office at St James's Palace, although it has not denied that a "Camilla campaign" is in full swing.

The two programmes come just two weeks after the *Daily Mail* splashed with the headline "Charles and Camilla: could they marry?", which quoted "friends" of the couple speculating that public opinion had softened in favour of a marriage that would avoid Camilla being called Queen.

Royal correspondents for the tabloid press admit that the sources for a number of pro-Camilla stories are professional public relations experts who are advising the couple with the complicity of St James's Palace. These include one unpaid advisor from Sir Tim Bell's PR agency, Lowe Bell Communications.

The re-making of Mrs Parker Bowles began in April, when she posed for her first official photograph, as a patron of the National Osteoporosis Society.

Paul McCann

Tracie Andrews trial told of row before murder

The jury in the trial of Tracie Andrews, accused of the murder of her boyfriend, Lee Harvey, yesterday heard a nine-year-old girl tell police that she had heard two people arguing outside a house beside the murder scene.

The child, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, said in a videotaped interview that she believed the two voices belonged to a man and a woman.

Andrews' version of events is that her boyfriend was murdered by another man in a road-rage attack.

The little girl was staying in Coopers Hill in Worcestershire, on 1 December last year, the night Mr Harvey died from more than 30 stab wounds.

"I woke up, I heard some people talking outside. It sounded like two people and there was definitely a man. He was shouting and it sounded as if they were arguing," she said.

She added: "I didn't hear what they said but they were definitely having an argument. I didn't hear the other voice because it was softer than the man's voice."

Earlier, the court heard Susan Duncan, a local resident (above), tell how Andrews had been unable to describe the alleged assailant's car. "She was covered in blood. It was all over her face, all over her hair, and all down her top ... What she was saying to me sounded



very just disjointed at that time. I asked more questions. I asked her about the other vehicle, I asked her if she had seen the colour of the vehicle. She said 'no', Mrs Duncan said.

"I asked her if she has seen the make of the car and she said 'no'. I asked her if she had seen any part of the registration number — a letter or a number — and she said 'no'."

Andrews, 28, of The Becks, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, denies murdering Mr Harvey. The prosecution claims that she launched a vicious attack on him as they drove home from a pub.

But Andrews told police that they had been chased along country lanes by another vehicle and that Mr Harvey was murdered by a man who was passenger of the mystery vehicle.

Jojo Moyes

Woman's bone marrow may not help dying sister

A woman who overcame her fear of hospitals to help save her dying sister has been told their bone marrow does not match.

Susan Squires and her sister, Angela Latham, both from Blackpool, did not speak for three years after Ms Squires refused to consider a transplant to help her sister fight leukaemia.

Doctors treating 34-year-old Mrs Latham had scoured a worldwide register of 4 million bone marrow donors before concluding that only Ms Squires, 39, could help.

Ms Squires finally agreed in April, after she was told she need not go to hospital. She gave blood samples at her home and "had come to terms" with the operation.

But tests showed the sisters' marrow was a "partial mismatch" and Ms Squires was only as suitable as an unrelated donor.

"She was as disappointed as I was with the results of the tests. After everything we'd gone through it was not what I was expecting," Mrs Latham said.

The mother-of-two has vowed to go ahead with the operation if possible, despite warnings of complications. She is now waiting on advice from specialists at Manchester Royal Infirmary as to whether the transplant should go ahead.

"It's a case of weighing everything up. All we can do is wait."

Jojo Moyes

briefing

EDUCATION

Universities should scrap degree classifications

Universities should move towards replacing the traditional honours degree classifications with a pass/fail system to iron out variations in degree standards, according to an influential report.

The study, published yesterday by the Higher Education Quality Council, concludes that a minimum "threshold standard" for degrees would help ensure consistency, reassuring students and employers.

Though universities, like cars, varied widely in type and purpose, they could all be obliged to pass common quality standards, the HEQC said.

The Graduate Standards Programme, launched three years ago amid mounting concern that rapid expansion in higher education had led to an overall decline in standards, confirmed that degrees in different universities and subjects were not comparable. There were now very few people who believed that "a degree is a degree", said Peter Wright, project director.

The idea of threshold standards for degrees was popular both in higher education and outside, the report found. Academics saw the system as a way of guaranteeing accountability in the eyes of the public, while students wanted to be sure of quality, particularly if they had to contribute financially towards their courses.

However, the HEQC study concluded a threshold system could not be introduced until moves had been made to ensure more comparability between degrees, including stronger external examining. Common terminology was also needed to ensure diploma or a degree at various levels had the same meaning at all higher education institutions.

Lucy Ward

DRUGS

Ecstasy users suffer depression

Nearly three-quarters of ecstasy users feel they are suffering long-term negative consequences of their behaviour, with the most frequent complaints being depression and loss of concentration.

According to a survey of nearly 500 long-term regular users — defined as those who have used the drug at least once every two months for two years or more — found that people over 30 are more likely to get feelings of depression, and a third link this to their ecstasy use.

In a separate survey, doctors in accident and emergency departments said that ecstasy has now become the second most common drug in terms of patients presenting adverse reactions to illegal substances.

Practically all of the users interviewed for BBC Radio 5 Live's Young Britain season said that they had at some point taken ecstasy with another drug. Six out of 10 said they always mixed ecstasy with another drug, the most common being amphetamines, cannabis, alcohol and LSD. And despite the fact that three-quarters of all ecstasy users owned up to concerns about ecstasy's long-term effects, only one in 20 said they would not take the drug again.

Glenda Cooper



HOSPITALS

Denial of care costs 2,500 lives

More than 2,500 people may die every year — a similar number to those killed in road traffic accidents — because they are being wrongly turned away from intensive care units, according to a new study.

Patients who were turned away from hospital intensive care units because of bed shortages were 60 per cent more likely to die than those who were admitted, said researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine writing in the *Lancet*.

The study, the first of its kind in Britain, examined six intensive care units over a three-month period and compared the death rates of patients who were refused admission because of lack of facilities with those who were treated.

Researcher Alison Metcalfe and her team found that 165 of the 650 adult patients who were eligible for admission were turned away.

When they followed the cases up, three months later, they found that 37 per cent of those who were admitted to intensive care, and 46 per cent of those who were denied admission had died. They concluded that the potential excess risk for those who were not admitted was 60 per cent.

Glenda Cooper

POLICE

Complaints threaten confidence

Increasing numbers of complaints of sexual and racial harassment by police officers against their own colleagues is undermining public faith in the ability of the service to handle sensitive investigations, the Police Complaints Authority warned yesterday.

Launching the authority's 1996/97 annual report, Peter Moorhouse, the chairman, said the fact that three police authorities had voluntarily referred high-profile sex discrimination allegations for investigation suggested "an apparent inability within forces to manage gross disharmony between officers who should be colleagues."

The authority also highlighted continuing concerns about deaths in custody, calling for force doctors to possess skills in diagnosing psychiatric, drug or alcohol problems and for "urgent consideration" to be given to the introduction of closed-circuit television in at least one cell in police stations, so that high-risk prisoners could be kept under observation.

Patricia Wynn Davies

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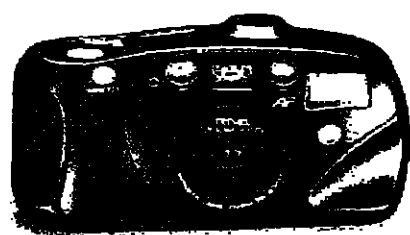


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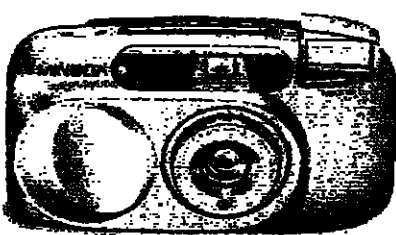
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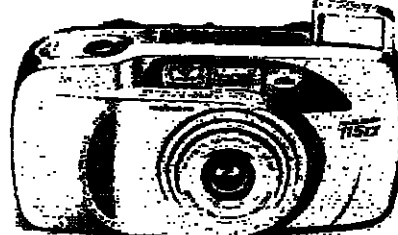
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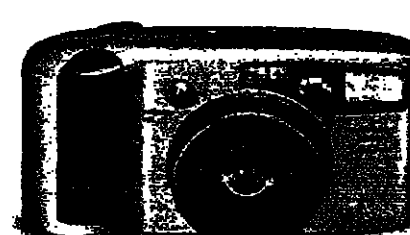


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The House of high fashion

The fresh intake of Labour MPs have provided a new model army for the glossy pages of *Elle* magazine

Alexandra Williams and Fran Abrams

Dressed in a classy range of trouser suits, short skirts and stilettos, the five formidable women are "sexy, stylish and spirited".

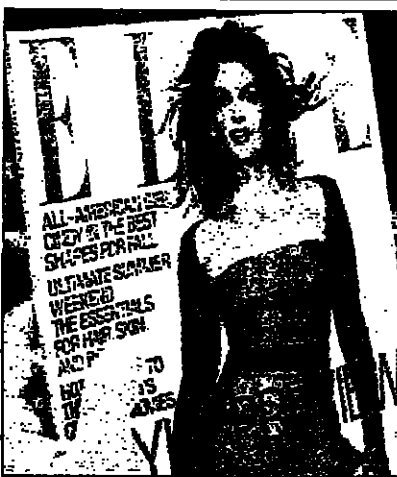
They embody the core values of *Elle*, the upmarket women's style magazine – but they are not the latest breed of professional model but members of Labour's new model army. Sumptuously spread over five pages, five Labour women MPs strut their stuff in the magazine's September issue.

The unprecedented number of Labour women MPs winning seats at the May election prompted the magazine's piece. Of the 101, Diane Abbott, Melanie Johnson, Caroline Flint, Shona McIsaac and Jane Griffiths escaped the Commons for a session as models in a top studio.

Fussed over by the fashion guru Iain R Webb, the women spent a day posing in front of the renowned photographer John Swannell's camera. But the magazine's photography director, Duane Ashurst, said: "These women are not fashion victims. They were a bit apprehensive at first but we assured them they wouldn't be modelling Versace ball gowns but instead smart day wear."

"In the main we chose the younger and newer MPs to the party and wanted a range of looks. We didn't want them all to have long blonde hair."

Swannell shot the black-and-white pictures two weeks ago in his studio in Camden, north London. But the magazine is keen to keep the pictures under wraps until nearer the publi-



Caroline Flint (right) and Jane Griffiths (above), two of the Labour MPs who have been photographed for the September issue of *Elle* (left). "These women are not fashion victims," the magazine's photography director, Duane Ashurst, said. "They were a bit apprehensive at first but we assured them they wouldn't be modelling Versace ball gowns but instead smart day wear"

Photographs: Nicola Kurtz



cation date of 8 August. Mr Ashurst said: "We can't give too much away too soon – there has to be an element of surprise for our readers."

"The clothing is very smart and the pictures are classic – the women look almost statuesque. They are smiling and up-beat."

The youngest model, the new Cleethorpes MP Shona McIsaac, 27, sports a pair of high spiked metal

stilettos and an above-the-knee skirt. Caroline Flint, 35-year-old new MP for Don Valley, sees the focus on fashion as a good way to reach the readers of women's magazines.

"If it were an angling magazine or an FA Cup magazine the focus would be different."

"But we are showing that as women politicians we share some of the same interests as other ordinary

women and I think that's good," she said.

The MP for Welwyn Hatfield, 42-year-old Melanie Johnson, said the five chose their outfits from a rack of clothes provided by *Elle*.

"I think there's quite a lot of interest in us as a group. There is a sense of change and of people finding out what that change means," she said.

Jane Griffiths, MP for Reading

East, was clad in a pin-striped wool suit for the shoot, and enjoyed the experience.

She said: "They definitely haven't made us look like models. It was a way of showing we were human beings."

Diane Abbott, Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP since 1987 and the only one in the group who was already an MP before the last elec-

tion, did not think the exercise particularly significant.

"*Elle* wanted to take some photographs of Labour women MPs. I have had my photograph in magazines before," she said.

Elle is not the only magazine to have taken an interest in the new intake of women MPs.

Since the general election returned a total of 120 women to Par-

liament their profile has been constantly high.

Within the first week, Richard and Judy had three new Labour women on their morning show for a makeover.

The MPs have also featured in *She* and *New Woman*. *Good Housekeeping* ran pictures of 70 of the new breed with their pledges on what they would like to do for women.

Recording is too much like hard work

Ian Burrell

Britain's pop stars are rebelling against music business bosses who they say are working them too hard.

Bands are being asked to produce what they claim is an exhausting supply of bonus tracks, remixes and alternative B-sides for different record formats. They say the practice, used by record companies to boost singles sales, leads to sub-standard material being released and undermines the credibility of the charts by inducing fans to buy several formats of the same single.

In a statement issued yesterday to *The Independent*, representatives of some of the biggest

names in British music called for a radical shake-up of the record industry.

The announcement by the IMF, the organisation which represents British music management, follows a meeting of its council members at the Royal Albert Hall on Wednesday. Among them were the managers of George Michael, Skunk Anansie, Cast, Mansun, Inspiral Carpets, the Boo Radleys, Bryan Ferry, Paul Young and Robbie Williams.

The IMF said: "The creative strain of having to write and produce dozens of additional tracks at great cost combined with the time pressures of a hectic promotional schedule frequently leads to sub-standard material

being released across several formats to help maximise sales and achieve a high chart position." The group said it would be calling for major changes in the singles market when it meets shortly with officials from the British Phonographic Industry.

It is likely to call for a reduction to just two record formats for singles – probably CD and seven-inch single – with an A side and one B side. A separate 12-inch vinyl chart for dance music only is also likely to be proposed.

Currently it is not uncommon for the same single to exist on a 25-minute CD (four tracks), a second 25-minute CD (with the same A side and three different bonus tracks), and a 40-

minute CD (A side remixed several times). The same single could alternatively be released on cassette single (different bonus tracks), seven-inch vinyl (still different bonus tracks), and 12-inch vinyl (up to 40 minutes of remixes).

Robert Swerdlow, manager of Cast and Mansun, said that with each single bands were giving away almost an album of free material which was not covered by their contract. "When a band gets signed to a recording company it is for albums and singles alone," he said. "Now the record companies are getting free of charge an extra 16 tracks a year in their catalogue which they could use to put out a B-sides album or a box set."

And he added: "It is material that the bands are probably not happy with 100 per cent."

Single sales have enjoyed a huge revival in the last two years as record companies have increased their efforts to use them as a promotional tool for albums. Britons buy more singles per head than any other country – except Japan – and sales are greater than at any time since 1982. Nearly 50 million singles were sold in 1996, a rise of 23 per cent on 1995.

Many sales are achieved, however, because shops can cut prices after receiving singles free from record companies. Ian McAndrew, manager of the Brand New Heavies, said: "It gives a great advantage to major

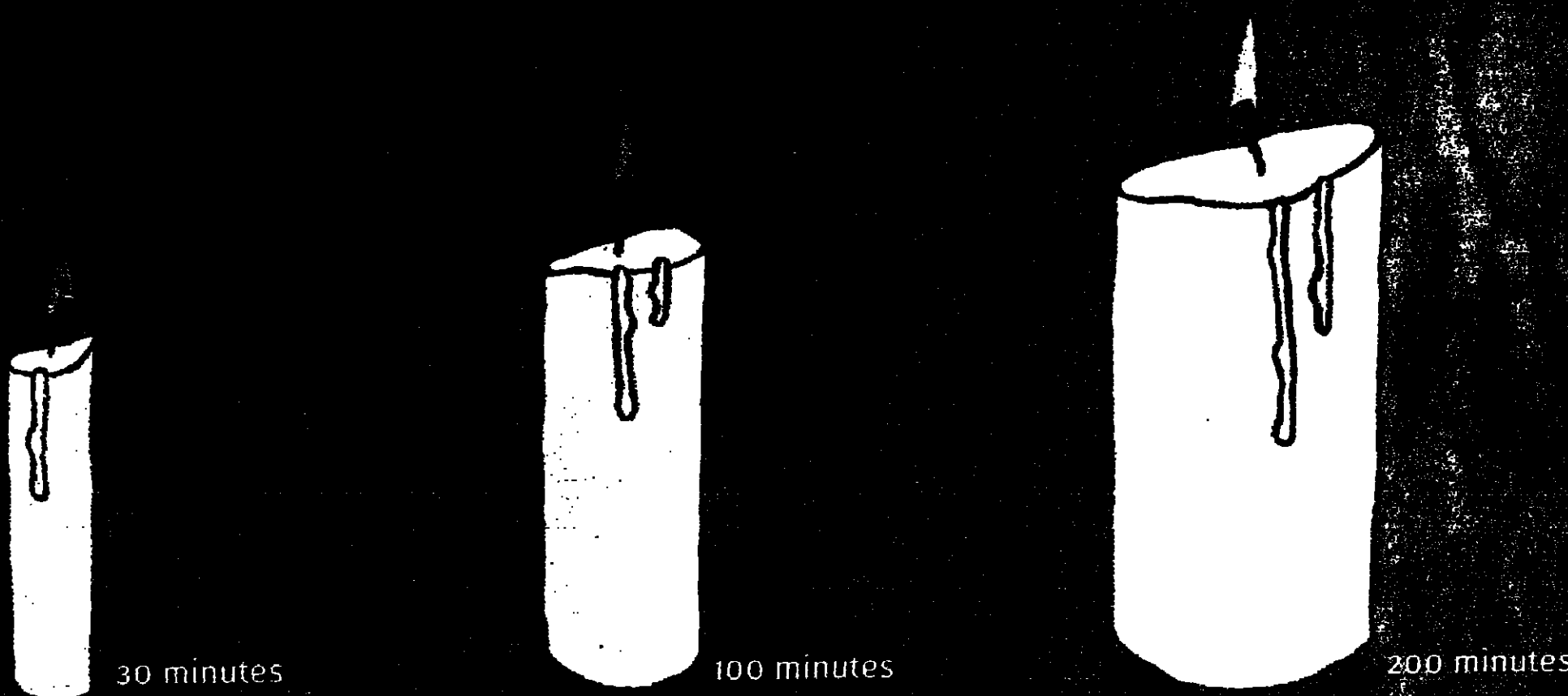
labels who can afford to give away a large volume of product but independent labels and less established artists who want their records sold at full price cannot compete."

Record industry sources said bonus tracks often involved little work from the band. "They can be live tracks, interviews or B-sides that have been recorded before," said one. "Bands should realise that no one makes money from singles which are a vehicle to draw attention, through radio, to the album."

David Hughes, of EMI, added: "The view of the public was that the capability of the CD was such that only giving them the old A and B side was not giving them value for money."



Protest song: Managers of artists such as George Michael (above) say they are being pressured to sanction sub-standard releases



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the sleaze report

Five men who fell below the standards

Hamilton: cash and a stay at Ritz

Neil Hamilton:

Former barrister specialising in taxation, aged 48. Became MP for Tatton in 1983 but lost his seat to Martin Bell. Entered Parliament in 1983, became a government whip in 1990 and was corporate affairs minister from 1992 to 1994. The charges: That he took £10,000 from Ian Greer to lobby ministers and failed to declare it on the Register of Members' Interests or to the Inland Revenue. That he twice failed to declare free hospitality at the Ritz Hotel in Paris from the Harrods owner, Mohamed al-Fayed, and that he stayed at Mr Fayed's estate, Balnagown Castle, without declaring it. That some of the money was disguised as gifts of paintings and other items and that he also took thousands of pounds in envelopes

from Mr Fayed. That he deliberately misled Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, about his relationship with Mr Greer.

Downey verdict: There was compelling evidence that Mr Hamilton received cash directly from Mr Fayed in return for lobbying services. Although the total amount was unclear it was unlikely to have been less than the £18,000-£25,000 received by Tim Smith. The way the payments were received and concealed fell well below standards expected of MPs.

Mr Hamilton deliberately misled Mr Heseltine, president of the board of trade, in 1994, when he said he had no financial relationship with Mr Greer. In a phone conversation he gave an absolute assurance that there was no such relationship, when in fact he had received two commission payments from him in 1988



Neil Hamilton: Downey said there was compelling evidence he had received money from Al Fayed for lobbying.

Photograph: Brian Harris

and 1989, totalling £10,000. There was no evidence he received cash indirectly from Mr Fayed through Mr Greer, though he admitted taking payments from Mr Greer for other services.

Hospitality Mr Hamilton received from Mr Fayed at the Ritz and elsewhere was for lobbying and should have been registered. The Inland Revenue was not told of the two commission payments from Mr

Greer, and Mr Hamilton asked for payment in kind so the sums would not be taxable.

In 1990 Mr Hamilton deliberately gave the impression he had severed links with Mr Fayed but three months

later was still soliciting favours, in the form of a second stay at the Ritz. Mr Hamilton failed to register two introduction payments from Mr Greer in relation to United States Tobacco and the National Nuclear Cor-

poration, some of which he took in kind. But there was insufficient evidence to show that the UST payment was a disguised consultancy fee. He also failed to register hospitality from UST.

Mr Hamilton persistently and deliberately failed to declare interests in the House of Fraser and Skoal Bandits. His action in accepting a commission payment for introducing a constituent to Mr Greer and a consultancy fee for representing a constituent's interests were unacceptable.

A consultancy fee from Strategy Network International was not registered on the spurious grounds that Mr Hamilton had disposed of his interest within four weeks. An allegation that he accepted a paid consultancy from Mobil Oil in return for asking parliamentary questions was not substantiated.

Sir Gordon's report said Mr Hamilton seemed to harbour the misconception that a small gift represented a small obligation. "There is a general obligation on members to the effect: 'If in doubt, register.' Mr Hamilton seems to have adopted the opposite principle and, if in doubt, gave himself the benefit of it."

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Smith: accepted cash in return for lobbying

Tim Smith:

Conservative MP for Beaconsfield from 1982 until this year, when he was forced to stand down amid allegations of bribery-taking. Worked for Leon Brittan at the Home Office from 1983-85 and was a Northern Ireland minister from January to October 1994, but resigned when the cash for questions affair broke. The charges: That as chairman of the Conservative Trade and Industry Committee, he took bribes from Mr Fayed to ask questions about the takeover of the House of Fraser and to lobby ministers.

That in 1986 he was paid cash to arrange an adjournment debate in the Commons attacking the Observer and its owner, Tony Rowland, for running stories against the Harrods owner. He declared the payments to the Inland Revenue but not to the registrar of members' interests. The verdict: Mr Smith did accept cash payments directly from Mr Fayed, of between £18,000 and £25,000, in return for lobbying. There was no evidence that he received cash from Mr Fayed via Mr Greer. The way in which these payments were received and concealed fell well below the

standards expected of MPs. The allegation that Mr Smith was paid to initiate an adjournment debate was not substantiated.

Mr Smith's financial interest in House of Fraser was only registered in January 1989, when it had been publicly exposed by Mr Rowland, and then only for a period of two and a half weeks.

"This has to be seen as a disingenuous attempt at concealment. On any view, this is a totally unacceptable form of registration by Mr Smith," Sir Gordon wrote. He also criticised Mr Smith for continuing to deny receiving cash payments. "This lack of candour by Mr Smith and the uncertainty over the total sums he received from Mr Al Fayed are matters of great concern. Mr Smith is a chartered accountant and I should have expected him to have more accurate records," he wrote.

The MP persistently and deliberately failed to declare his interests in dealings with ministers and officials over House of Fraser issues.

However, to his credit, he did eventually admit receiving payments, although not until he was asked in 1994. He also expressed his regrets for the non-registration and non-declaration of his interests.

Grylls: Misled committee over dealings

Sir Michael Grylls:

A former Royal Marine and son of a brigadier, he served as a Conservative MP for 27 years until he stood down in May, aged 63. Most recently was member for Surrey North West.

The charges: That he was regularly paid by Ian Greer, and he abused his position on the parliamentary trade and industry committee to make profits. He failed to note his relationship with Mr Greer on the Register of Members' Interests and lied to the select committee on members' interests in 1990.

Downey verdict: Sir Michael took non-cash payments from Mr Greer, though it was not possible to conclude that they originated from Mr Fayed. However, he did actively participate in lobbying campaigns organised by Mr Greer.

The MP deliberately misled the select committee on members' interests in 1990 when he seriously understated the number of commission payments he had received. He also omitted to inform them of other fees he received from Mr Greer.

Sir Gordon was particularly critical of Sir Michael's failure

to tell the committee about his full dealings with Mr Greer.

The committee's report, which concluded that there had been "no clear infringement of the rules," would have been quite different if it had known all the facts, he said.

"In his evidence Sir Michael had omitted altogether to refer to the direct, regular payments received from Mr Greer or Ian Greer Associates which had the effect of putting Sir Michael on an annual, but undisclosed, retainer with the lobbying organisation. I believe the concealment was deliberate."

Sir Gordon also concluded that when meeting ministers and officials to talk about the affairs of the House of Fraser, Sir Michael persistently failed to declare his interest in Mr Fayed's affairs.

Sir Michael also accepted a commission payment from Mr Greer for introducing him to Charles Church, whose property company had its headquarters in his constituency. This was unacceptable, though there was insufficient evidence to show that Sir Michael solicited business for Mr Greer in expectation of commission payments.

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that Parliament demands from an MP

Scandal that changed the face of politics

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The cash for questions affair permanently changed the face of British politics. It led to the demise of three ministers, and it resulted in the setting up of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life, and the creation of a Parliamentary Commissioner. Sir Gordon Downey, whose report was published yesterday.

The hero/villain of the affair is Mohamed al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. The villain, because it was largely his patronage that led many MPs to err by accepting money to ask questions in Parliament. The hero, because it was his information that led to the first publication of the details of the affair.

Certainly, without Mr Fayed's information, Mr Hamilton, Mr Smith and the rest would probably still be respectable MPs: Jonathan Aitken, who was also downed by Mr Fayed's information, might be the Tory leader, and Ian Greer Associates would still be advertising its wares

on the back of *Vacher's Parliamentary Companion*.

The story starts with the battle between Tiny Rowland, who then owned the *Observer*, and the Fayed brothers, for control of Harrods, which culminated in their successful bid in 1984.

Mr Rowland retaliated, using the *Observer* to publish attacks on Mr Fayed who, in turn, responded by employing the political lobbyist, Ian Greer, to counter the criticisms. Mr Greer enlisted the help of numerous Tory MPs, including Neil Hamilton. Other MPs who helped included Tim Smith, Sir Michael Gyles and Andrew Bowden.

Mr Fayed poured cash into Ian Greer Associates, which was disbursed to 40 mainly Tory MPs for election expenses - not in itself, against the rules. He was also generous in his hospitality, particularly to Mr Hamilton, who ran up a bill of £4,221 at the Paris Ritz in September 1987.

Mr Fayed wanted to be a British citizen, but his application was being blocked. He couldn't understand why all the money he had paid out had not reaped any



Rogues gallery: (From left) Tim Smith, Michael Brown (top), Andrew Burden and Sir Michael Gyles, who were condemned in the Downey report

benefits. Eventually he began to tell his tales to journalists.

In September 1994, he summoned Brian Hitchen, then editor of the *Sunday Express*, to his office and told him the tales of cash for questions. He specifically named Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith.

Mr Hitchen alerted John Major to the allegations, and the Prime Minister set up an inquiry

headed by Sir Robin Butler. Five days before Sir Robin's inquiry was published, towards the end of October, the *Guardian*, which had been alerted by Mr Fayed, ran a story about cash for questions involving Mr Smith and Mr Hamilton.

Mr Hamilton and Mr Greer launched a libel action against the *Guardian*, but days before it was due to reach court in Octo-

ber 1996, first Mr Greer then Mr Hamilton pulled out. It gave the media the opportunity to run the stories over and over again.

The matter was referred to the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, along with the behaviour of two Tory ministers, David Willeits and Andrew Mitchell. Mr Mitchell was cleared, but Mr Willeits had to resign as Paymaster General

after the committee found he had "dissembled". Sir Gordon was expecting to present his main findings just before the election, but John Major's decision to prorogue Parliament prevented publication.

The *Guardian* responded by publishing documents resulting in the resignation of Mr Smith as a parliamentary candidate. Mr Hamilton wobbled but

stayed on, only to be defeated by Martin Bell.

It looked, to the electorate, that Mr Major had avoided publishing the report before the election, and certainly its damning contents would not have helped the Tories' cause. But neither did withholding it, and all the MPs investigated who were standing lost their seats.

Leading article, page 19

20 are cleared by the findings

Twenty present and former MPs were wholly or partially exonerated, including Sir Peter Hordern, a consultant to the House of Fraser who also stayed at the Ritz and Balmorhall Castle. He registered his consultancy but not Mr Fayed's hospitality but Sir Gordon "would not see this as grounds for censure."

Lady Olga Maitland worked for Mr Greer before becoming an MP and although she invoked for the work after her election there was no need to list it on the register of members' interests. Gerald Malone, former health minister, received an election donation of £1,000 from Mr Fayed 18 months after meeting him to talk about his affairs but this was perfectly proper.

The others who had no case to answer were: Robert Atkins, Alan Beith, Vivian Bendall, John Birt, Sir Graham Bright, Nirj Deva, Sir Anthony Durant, Gwyneth Dunwoody, Doug Hoyle, Norman Lamont, David Mellor, Michael Portillo, David Shaw, Chris Smith, Sir Malcolm Thornton, Sir Gerard Vaughan and Sir John Wheeler.

Bowden: Did not declare

Sir Andrew Bowden:

Former businessman and MP for Brighton Kemptown since 1970, now aged 67. Lost his seat to Labour on May 1 this year. Knighted in 1994, but was never promoted to ministerial rank.

The charge: That he took more than £5,000 from Mr al Fayed, through Ian Greer, towards his election funds in 1987, and that he did not declare all of it.

The verdict: The election donation of £5,319 from Mr Greer was intended as a reward for lobbying and Sir Andrew probably knew it came originally from Mr Fayed. He had maintained that he did not know the money came from Mr Fayed.

However, there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation that Sir Andrew received, or demanded, cash payments from Mr Fayed in return for lobbying services.

The MP failed to register this donation. He also failed to declare his interests in dealings with ministers and officials over House of Fraser, and in one case gave a positively misleading explanation for his representations.

Mr Bowden also received lecture fees from Mr Greer which were entered in the Register of Members' Interests, and although the source was not identified this was probably adequate.

Brown: Failed to register

Michael Brown:

MP since 1979, first for Brigg and Scunthorpe and since 1983 for Brigg and Cleethorpe. Lost his seat to Labour on 1 May. The only openly gay Conservative MP he was a minister for trade and industry, Northern Ireland and foreign affairs between 1989 and 1993.

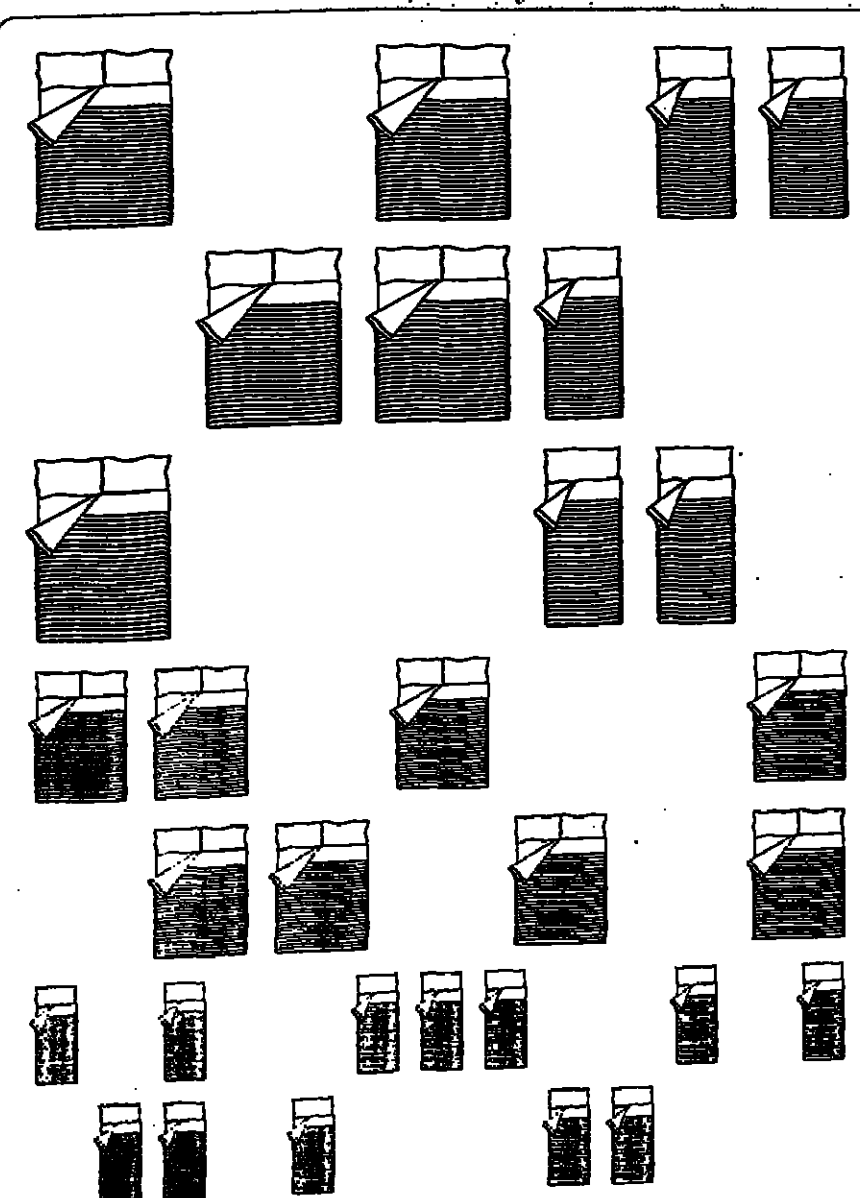
The charges: That he took £6,000 from Ian Greer Associates for work on be-

half of US Tobacco, and that he did not declare it in the Register of Members' Interests or to ministers, and that he did not pay tax on the money until the payments became publicly known. The verdict: Mr Brown failed to register an introduction payment from Mr Greer on behalf of US Tobacco. He also persistently and deliberately failed to declare an interest in Skoal Bandits in his dealings with ministers over the issue. He did

not immediately declare the payment to the Inland Revenue. He accepted that they should have been declared and apologised for not doing so.

Mr Brown had lobbied, along with Mr Hamilton, against the banning of Skoal Bandits, which were believed to cause mouth cancer. Mr Brown also received a free flight to Connecticut to be briefed by the company. However, he did list this in the Register of Members' Interests.

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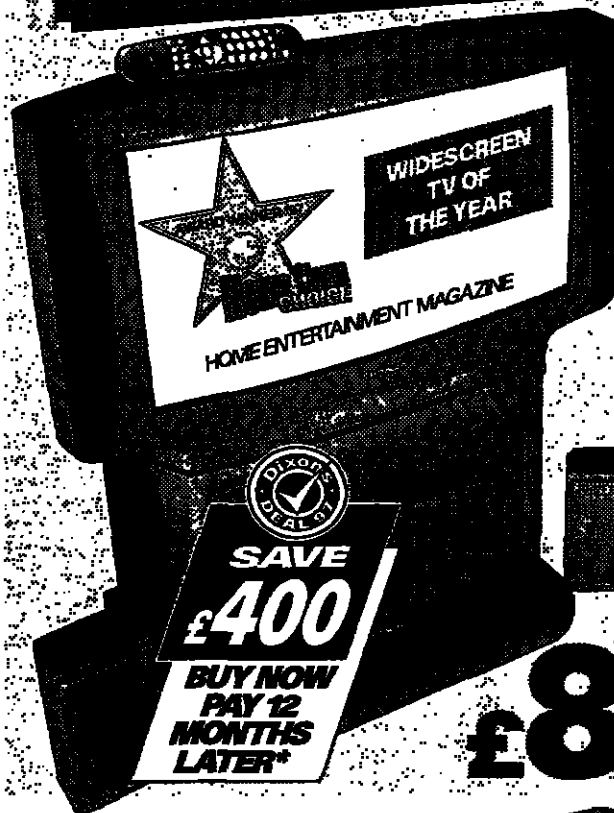
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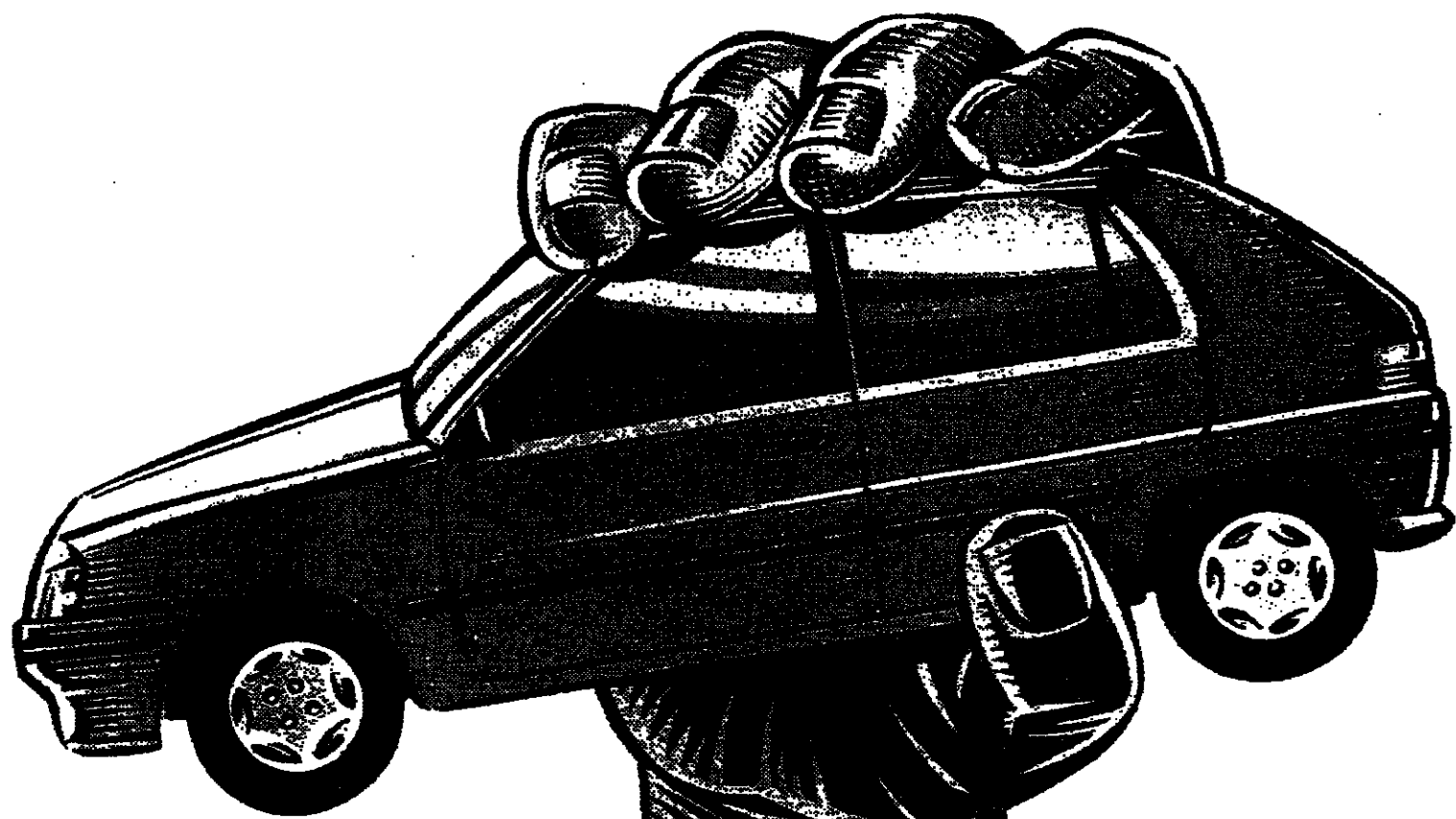
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news

As another high-profile case is sent back to the Appeal Court, members of the Birmingham Six find their nightmare lives on

Freed from injustice but still imprisoned in their own tragedy



Back in court: Paddy Hill is still calling for adequate compensation some six years after he and other members of the Birmingham Six were freed Photographs: Tom Pilstor

Steve Boggan
Chief Reporter

First the state took away their liberty and now it seems intent on stripping the Birmingham Six of their dignity. It is six years since the men were cleared of

the Birmingham pub bombings, but their nightmares continue. Psychologically, they are still not free.

Depression, anxiety and failed relationships have littered their paths since they were released after 16 years in

prison. Yesterday, money was added to the list of problems when Paddy Hill appeared before magistrates to explain why he was in arrears with his council tax.

It was a bizarre, almost surreal occasion. Mr Hill, a

diminutive, hyperactive 52-year-old, was once more in the dock but this time the court and its officers seemed deeply embarrassed by his very presence.

"This isn't a protest," he told the bench at Haringey Magistrates Court in north London.

"I simply don't have any money. Since I got out of prison I have received an interim [compensation] payment and I have paid all my bills every year. But now I have run out of money. In January, I made an application for sickness benefit,

but I was told I wasn't eligible because no contributions were paid during the 16 years I was in prison. I am still being treated as though I am guilty even though I have been exonerated. I have since found out that I am barred from all benefits."

Mr Hill was summonsed after missing just two payments of £80 towards his council tax. Robert Allan, the clerk to the court, explained that the magistrates had no choice but to issue a liability order against Mr Hill, but he hoped the council would be sympathetic towards his case before enforcing it.

Dorothy Wilkinson, chair of the bench, appeared concerned at Mr Hill's plight. "Keep in touch with the local authority and let them know how your compensation case is coming," she suggested. "I am sure they will be sympathetic."

Paul Rudd, representing the local authority, seemed slightly uncomfortable. "We will do everything we can to assist him," he said.

"Bloody hell," said Mr Hill afterwards. "I wish it had been like that in 1974."

His problems, and those of the other five - Gerry Hunter, Hugh Callaghan, Richard McKenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker - stem largely from an apparent reluctance on the part of the Home Office to adequately compensate them for the years they wasted in prison. They have had two interim payments totalling £200,000 but they believe they are entitled to much more - and to an apology. In spite of their increasingly desperate circumstances, wrangling over the compensation drags on.

"The interim payments sound like a lot of money but

not when you consider that we couldn't go back and live in Birmingham so we had to re-settle," said Mr Hill. "I had to buy a place to live in London, so that was more than £100,000 gone immediately."

"I squandered much of the rest on my children and grandchildren. I had terrible feelings of guilt for not being there for them and, I suppose, I tried to buy their love. What else do you do when your own grandchildren run away because they don't recognise you?"

After their release, none of the men was offered counselling or help of any other kind. All six suffer anxiety attacks and depression to various degrees. All have had relationship problems, some of which have resulted in splits or divorce, although one, happily, has been reconciled with his wife.

The men hope that their compensation log-jam might be freed by the new Government. Sally Mulready, the secretary of the campaign to free them, said they had asked Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, for a meeting.

"What has happened to these men is a national disgrace," she said. "It's now time to compensate them for losing so much of their lives. But it isn't just the money. They want the apology they never had from the last government. All it would take for them all to feel much better is for someone to simply stand up and say: 'Sorry'."

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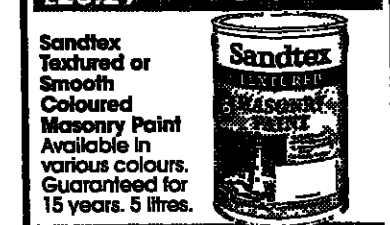
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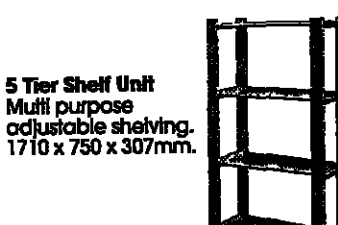
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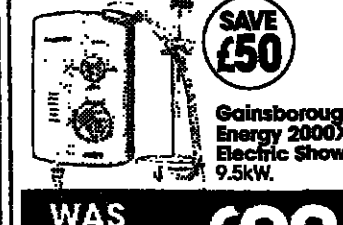
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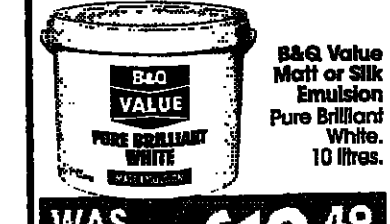
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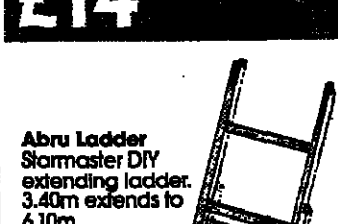
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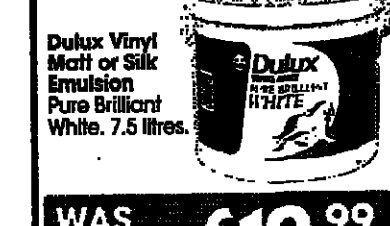
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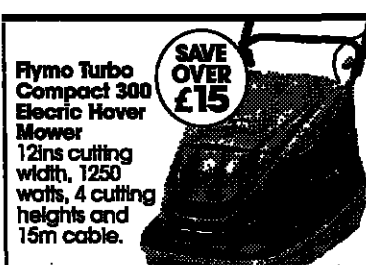
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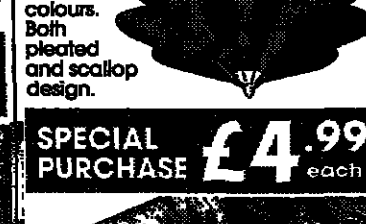
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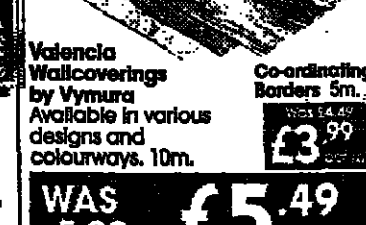
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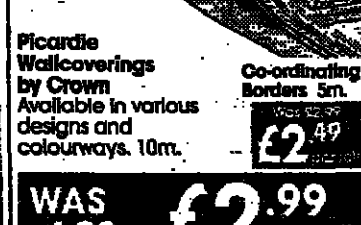
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Hyde Park IRA bomber wins fresh appeal

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Mounting doubts over forensic evidence in the case of Danny McNamee, jailed for the 1982 IRA Hyde Park bombing, finally led yesterday to his case being sent back to the Court of Appeal.

The decision by the Criminal Cases Review Commission - the first by the independent miscarriage of justice watchdog since it began work in April this year - comes a week ahead of a televised admission, on Channel 4's *Trial and Error* programme, by self-confessed IRA bomb-maker Dessie Ellis that electronic circuit boards linked to McNamee bore a close resemblance to those Ellis had been convicted of constructing.

McNamee, sentenced to 25 years for conspiracy to cause the 1982 explosion, was described by the prosecution at his 1987 trial as the IRA's "master bomb maker."

But the commission said yesterday that the conviction should be reconsidered following inquiries into scientific and fingerprint evidence and non-disclosure of evidence at the time of McNamee's first appeal in 1991.

McNamee, 37, a former electronics engineer from Cross-

maglen, Co Armagh, has persistently denied membership of the IRA and protested his innocence.

His conviction turned on the discovery of his fingerprints on tape found in two IRA arms dumps, and on a battery which survived the explosion.

McNamee said in his defence that rolls of that kind of tape could have been handled by numbers of people in the electronics factory where he worked, while he had repaired thousands of CB radios which contained similar batteries.

The trial heard that there were more than 100 prints on the contents of the arms caches, which the prosecution accepted were from innocent parties.

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An Authorised Officer

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Ulster nerves taut as Orange parades near

Michael Streeter
Portadown

The tension was almost tangible in Portadown yesterday as both Protestant and Catholic communities look forward nervously to Sunday's planned Orange parade. The more visible signs at Drumcree and its effect on the psyche of the town were also there. In the largely Catholic Garvaghy Road area, through which the march is scheduled to pass, youths were busy erecting bunting in the colours of the Irish Tricolour and repainting anti-Orange slogans on walls. Elsewhere in the mainly Protestant town, Union flags fluttered from scores of windows and the bonfires that traditionally mark the Orange Order's July celebrations were piling high.

Such tension is familiar for the 103 Protestants families still living at the bottom of the Garvaghy Road, an area once known as The Walk because of its associations with parades but now mostly Catholic. One woman sitting in her living room with a photograph of the Queen, talks of the intimidation she and neighbours suffer from nationalists all year round but especially in July. "Windows are smashed, doors are kicked and our children can't play safely in the park." She recalls a recent incident in which a six-year-old Protestant boy was surrounded by Catholic teenagers who asked him what his religion was. "He didn't understand, but when they asked if



he listened to bands with his mother he said 'yes', so they urinated all over him."

Despite, or because of this, the woman who like most people approached by The

Independent asked not to be named, is furious at speculative talk that the Portadown Lodge might choose not to walk down the Garvaghy Road. "Even though

we will bear the brunt here, the march must go through. I'm not going to be driven out."

But according to Ivor Young, who four months ago helped found the Concerned

Protestants Committee in the town, said many had been driven out by what he called "ethnic cleansing" inspired by nationalists. And he claimed that the outside world has

The Garvaghy Road 'Justice Camp' which police will have to remove if the march goes ahead. Photograph: Pacemaker

chosen to ignore the plight of such Protestants for too long. Sunday's parade is make-or-break for the Unionists, he believes, and if the Lodge does not march down the road he says he will urge "ordinary men, women and children" to do just that. "We are getting walked upon, but I think we are beginning to wake up to what's happening. We're not dull."

In the town centre there is deeply felt support for the parade. "We don't want any trouble but I think our community has given enough away," says one woman. Another adds: "I think that people would be devastated if it didn't go ahead."

On the Garvaghy Road itself, where Catholic women have set up a self-styled "Justice Camp" in an attempt to prevent the march going through, a woman said: "Why can't they march in their own part of town? I just want my children to be able to go out and be safe." She denied that Protestants had been driven out. "It's just that when they leave they tend to be replaced by Catholics."

Few Protestants believe her. They talk of a Sinn Féin orchestrated campaign to bring in outsiders for the weekend's protests, and of claims that petrol bombs have been prepared. One said: "They won't be happy until the area is 100 per cent Catholic."

Plans to put 3-year-olds in nursery

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Legislation to compel local authorities to ensure that education is provided for three and four-year-olds would be introduced under government proposals expected to be published today.

Draft guidelines on the Government's pledge to provide free nursery education for all four-year-olds aim to end the lottery of schooling for under-fives in some authorities nearly all four-

The consultation document asks whether such a duty would be desirable and when it should come into force. David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, has said that he wants all four-year-olds to have a free nursery place by next September and that, eventually, there should be places for all three-year-olds.

Local authorities are being asked to draw up plans to show how they would achieve the targets. Part of the funding for nursery education, the guidelines propose, would be an earmarked grant to be released only if Mr Blunkett approves an authority's plan.

Authorities will have to set up new bodies to draw up plans by next April. The bodies should include parents as well as representatives from the private and voluntary sector, the guidelines suggest.



David Blunkett: Wants nursery places for all

Ministers' ultimate aim is for the bodies to plan childcare and education for all children aged one to eight. The Government will invite bids for the establishment of 25 pilot centres of excellence which will be expected to show how early education and childcare can be combined with other family services such as adult literacy programmes and parenting courses. Sue Owen of the National Children's Bureau early childhood unit said yesterday that she welcomed the proposal for a new duty on local authorities but legislation alone would not achieve the Government's aims. "You have to make things mandatory to make serious change but you also have to do something to ensure quality and to provide funding."

Graham Lane, chair of the Local Government Association's education committee, said that local authorities would welcome a change in the law. "It will help to ensure that authorities prepare proper plans for nursery provision."

year-olds receive nursery education while, in others, hardly any do. The proposal would overturn legislation introduced by the Conservatives 16 years ago which made it clear that councils had no statutory duty to provide nursery education.

Guidelines to be sent out for consultation say that the school starting age would remain the same so parents would still choose whether they wanted education for younger children.

However, they say that to guarantee the achievement of the targets for four-year-olds and three-year-olds it would be necessary to place a statutory duty on local authorities to secure the provision of nursery education for a specific age range of pupils.

DAILY POEM

Ballad of the Painted Eagle

By Du Fu (712-770)

High in the hall I saw a live bird,
vibrant, its bones of autumn stirred,
and at first I marvelled how without the jesses
they got it to stay there long.

Then I understood, it was a painter's marvel,
a skill that seemed a hole in Creation,
and drew the face of gods like grandeur
to serve as features in your eyes.

Magpies' shadows fill the low-hanging boughs,
they seem to fear its coming forth.

It sits still and looks at blue clouds,
never far from the common bird.

(s) know are like lives or swords
out to carry it to the realm of men.

Be with a vast, empty height,
as though in the powder and ink.

Cloudy sands' edge,
and fog.

feel such pain,
beliefs twisted within?

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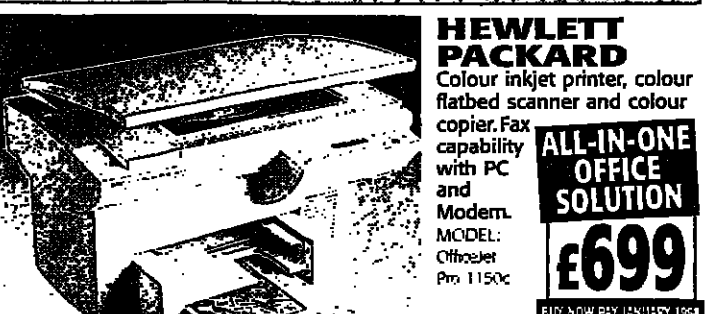


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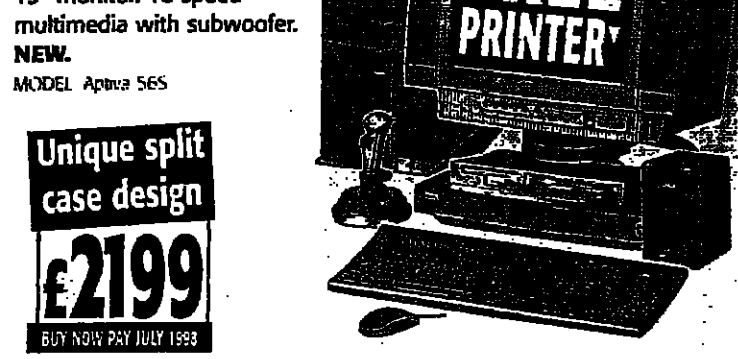
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صكزا من الاصل

The Conran superwomen turn Sir Terence into a marital loser

Kim Sengupta

He is a man of immense wealth who has shaped the way we live now. The British Prime Minister and the American President chose his restaurant to eat during a state visit. But when it comes to his personal life, Sir Terence Conran appears to have an expensive habit of losing wives.

Yesterday at the High Court he was ordered to pay a £10.5m settlement to his latest ex-wife. Writer and journalist Caroline was the third woman to have married and then left Sir Terence.

However, like a previous incumbent of the role, Shirley Conran, the renowned author of "Superwoman", she has emerged from the partnership a successful figure in her own right.

Lady Caroline, 58, had asked for a cash pay-out of £8.7m. Sir Terence, 68, had offered £2.5m, claiming most of his £80m fortune had been created after the marriage ended.



But Mr Justice Wilson decreed Lady Caroline should receive £6.2m in cash, as well as a £1.1m home in Belgravia, another £800,000 home in Dorset and £400,000 worth of jewellery, cars and other items. Money she retains from her marriage brings the total to £10.5m.

In a public judgment delivered after a private hearing, the judge said



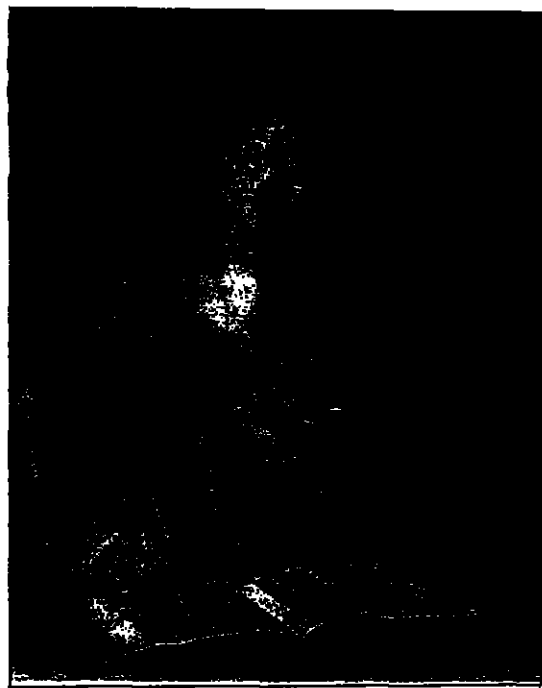
Terence Conran (right) and his former wives Shirley (far left) and Caroline

ex-wife had been an excellent mother and had "provided him with what he calls active home support", but disputed her contribution to his success, said the judge.

He continued: "He is, in my judgement, totally convinced that the wife has made no such contributions and that any award against him constructed even part by reference to them would be perverse."

"But it can be difficult for a man with a healthy ego who has achieved vertiginous success to look down and discern a contribution other than his own."

But... when everything is added together there is only one conclusion - the wife's energy was almost as prodigious as that of the husband; and her contribution to the welfare of the family in every sense was outstanding.



Surprise: Frans Hals' portrait of St John

£2m for lost Hals portrait

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

A painting of St John the Evangelist by the 17th Century Dutch master Frans Hals, which had been lost for 180 years, was bought by an anonymous bidder for five times the price expected. One of a set of four Evangelists acquired by Catherine the Great of Russia, it fetched £1.92m in a sale of Old Masters at Sotheby's yesterday.

Catherine acquired the set from Baron van Borck, minister to the King of Prussia in 1773. They remained in the Imperial Hermitage in St Petersburg until 1812 when they were among 30 paintings sent on the orders of Tsar Alexander I to churches in the Crimea.

After that, the location of the set remained a mystery until 1959 when Luke and Matthew were discovered in a storeroom of the Odessa Museum.

The two carried an attrib-

ution to an unknown 19th century Russian painter, but both also displayed traces of the red paint of their Hermitage inventory number. Saint Mark surfaced at auction in Milan in 1953, repainted as a bearded man in a ruff. The painting was confirmed as a Hals only after being cleaned in 1973 when the artist's monogram and St Mark's lion were revealed.

The long-lost fourth Evangelist was submitted to Sotheby's for sale by an unnamed woman who had no idea of its significance. St John is portrayed, as is customary, as a young man with his attributes, the gospels and eagle. The other three saints are portrayed as old men, as is usual.

Alexander Bell, head of Sotheby's Old Master paintings department, said: "This is a beautiful image, in untouched state, which displays the fluid brushwork and bold handling that are the hallmarks of this great painter."

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after the budget

Employees face big income loss on retirement

Roger Trapp

Employees throughout Britain face a reduction of up to 15 per cent in their retirement benefits as a result of the Budget's attack on dividend tax credits. Financial advisers said yesterday.

Experts predict widespread underfunding for retirement. Martin Slack, of actuaries Lane Clark & Peacock, said the move broke "the fundamental trust" between the Government and the public on which pension provision had been based. Actuaries calculate that a male of 35 expecting to retire at 65 and contributing 10 per cent of his £30,000 salary could, until Wednesday's speech, have expected a pension of £44,259 a year. But the loss of the tax credit could reduce that to £39,036 - a 12 per cent reduction.

The problem stems from Gordon Brown's ending of what has been seen as a perk for a handful of City institutions. But it is not that simple. The tax credit on dividends that results from a facet of corporate taxation known as Advance Corporation Tax (ACT) might look

like a target whose only victims are pension funds, which are not only faceless but also do not have a vote. But recent lobbying demonstrated that the potential ramifications go beyond the Square Mile.

ACT is a by-product of the system introduced in 1973 to try to reduce double taxation and is triggered when a corporation pays a dividend. The company pays shareholders a dividend net of the basic rate of income tax - 20 per cent - and pays the tax direct to the Inland Revenue on behalf of the shareholders.

But the real beneficiaries are those that do not pay tax - mostly tax-exempt institutions, such as pension funds, which account for 50 to 60 per cent of UK share ownership. They can reclaim the ACT paid by corporations on their behalf and receive substantial extra income in the form of gross dividends.

It has long been assumed that this extra "incentive" for City institutions to receive dividends has accounted for the British disease of short-termism by diverting funds away from investment in research and

development and related areas.

But many accountants argue that even with the cut in corporation tax the effect of the change will be to reduce investment because corporate cashflow will be hit by having to pay more to institutions to persuade them not to invest elsewhere or into their pension funds.

The approximately 6 million people in personal pension schemes will have to make up the shortfall by making additional contributions of 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent of their salaries. However, many - particularly the self-employed - will already be making their maximum contributions and must therefore face reduced benefits. What happens to the 4 million odd people in occupational plans will depend on whether their employers have final-salary or defined-contribution schemes. Companies with final-salary schemes are obliged to make up the difference, but a company can change the basis of its pension scheme or even wind it up at will.

End to pensions holiday, page 22



Grey area: Thanks to Gordon Brown, pensioners may not find it so easy to holiday take that holiday of a lifetime

Photograph: Herbie Knight

Price of postage may have to rise

Roger Trapp and Chris Godsmark

The Post Office and British Telecom are among the first companies to hint at the effect the abolition of the tax credit on Advanced Corporation Tax will have on them.

Though the reduction in cor-

poration tax from 33 per cent to 31 per cent has softened the blow, actuaries still calculate that the ending of the tax credit for pension funds will add about 10 per cent to the liabilities of companies operating occupational schemes.

Many local authorities which have already seen their funds se-

verely stretched by government cutbacks, warned that council tax may have to rise, or services cut, as they seek to make up the shortfall in their pension funds.

The Post Office would not rule out an increase in the price of postage stamps yesterday after the Chancellor's removal of pension fund tax relief

left the organisation with a bill of around £150m.

Executives from the Post Office were yesterday seeking a meeting with the Department of Trade and Industry to discuss how it could meet the extra cost. The bill is almost the same as the £130m raised last year when postage stamp prices rose by 1p.

The Post Office's two pension funds could see £1bn knocked off their £10bn value. "This missing link is what the DTI will say about our ability to meet Treasury financing limits," said a spokesman.

Though the Post Office this week revealed record profits of £577m for last year, it had to pay £285m straight back to the Treasury and a further £216m in corporation tax, leaving a buffer of just £76m. This year the sum paid into Treasury coffers will increase to £313m, a source of long-standing concern to Post Office directors

who wanted freedom from Exchequer constraints.

The spokesman said the Office would need a detailed review of the fund before it could calculate the precise cost of the measure. "It's just too early to say what the precise impact is. You couldn't say there will be a stamp rise, you couldn't say there won't be a stamp rise."

Though stamp prices have been frozen until at least April 1998, this week the Post Office could not guarantee it would stick to its pledge.

BT also expected to have to put further cash into its £20bn pension fund yesterday. "There obviously will be an effect on us. BT is committed to maintaining the health of the pension fund," said a spokeswoman.

The 119,000 employee members pay contributions of 6 per cent, matched by 9.5 per cent from BT. The fund had a surplus of £800m in 1995.

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after the budget

Blunkett cuts benefit for work-shy youth

Barrie Clement
and Anthony Bevins

Unemployed youngsters who drop out of the Government's £3.5bn Welfare to Work programme for no good reason will have their benefits removed completely, ministers revealed yesterday.

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, spelled out the details of his New Deal for the young which will grant them "rights" and demand obligations and will be compared to the

tough "Workfare" Schemes in the USA.

Introducing his crusade to get people off benefit and into jobs, Mr Blunkett said: "No one except those with disabilities or very good cause should refuse to take up the option to earn their own living." Unlike previous schemes the watchwords for the new regime would be "Quality, continuity and employability", he said.

When sanctions were imposed on the "workshy" by the Conservative Government under the Job-seekers' Allowance scheme, similar

penalties were denounced by Labour - and by Alan Howarth, the Conservative who subsequently defected to Labour and now serves as a Minister in Mr Blunkett's department.

The big difference now, according to Ministers, is that young people will be offered quality options.

As Mr Blunkett gave the Commons details of the new sanctions process last night, there was no sign of protest or dissent from the two dozen backbenchers in the Chamber. Mr Blunkett told the House: "I

know that young people will be persuaded that this is hope, not punishment." One new Labour MP even broke Commons convention with a short burst of clapping when Mr Blunkett ended his Budget debate speech.

Under the Welfare to Work programme, 178,000 jobless people between the ages of 18 and 24 and who have been out of work or training for more than six months would be forced to make themselves available.

The New Deal scheme begins with a programme of counselling as

part of the "gateway" to the new system.

Each participant will have an individual employment service advisor and, if necessary, will receive help with basic numeracy and literacy. Some may find jobs during this period which could last up to four months.

Participants would then progress to one of four options:

- A job with an employer each of whom would receive £60 a week for up to 26 weeks. An additional £750 would be paid to the employer for

one day's education or training a week.

- A placement with the Government's Environment Task Force, which will include day-release for education or training. Participants will receive a grant of £400 each.
- Work with a voluntary organisation including periods of training.
- The opportunity for those without qualifications to take up full-time education or training for a period of up to 12 months.

Where young people refuse all the options a government-appointed

adjudicator would then decide whether to cut off their Job-seekers' Allowance, or remove 40 per cent of it for those with dependants.

Under the old JSA regime they had to wait two weeks to resume payments, on appeal. Under the New Deal they would have to wait four weeks. A single person receives £38.90 a week JSA.

Those classified as vulnerable, normally people with children or dependants, but also those with disabilities or chronic sickness, would see their benefits reduced.

Councils forced to spend on school buildings

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Ministers are to force local authorities to spend their education windfall from the Budget on raising standards rather than teachers' salaries by feeding some of the cash into a special fund devoted to government-set projects.

Government sources yesterday said a proportion of the £835m extra money for English education authorities for next year would be distributed as part of the Grants for Education Support and Training (Gest) programme.

To push authorities to contribute more towards Gest, the Government plans to change the balance of funding for the programme. Where now the Government contributes 60 per cent of the total cost of projects and authorities pay the rest, councils will now be asked to share the cost equally.

The overall total in the pot will also rise by £60m in 1997-8 compared with this year, with the Government and local authorities each contributing £180m.

The government sources said last night: "This is one way of ensuring that some of the extra grant we are giving authorities next year is focused on literacy and numeracy and other aspects of the White Paper."

The paper, "Excellence in Schools", to be launched on Monday, will focus on raising standards in the classroom.



Schools project: The Chancellor has promised £1.3bn over the next five years to renovate dilapidated buildings. Photograph: Tom Pilsto

Education Secretary David Blunkett yesterday wrote to LEAs setting out his concern that the extra money should be spent on raising standards.

He wrote: "I want you to ensure therefore that the extra funding being

provided is used specifically for the benefit of schools in your authority."

Authorities are likely to be less content with ministers' tactics to control more of their spending. Ivor Widdison, policy officer for the Local Govern-

ment Association, said authorities were entirely in agreement with government objectives on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. But he predicted "disappointment" at the government's decision to reduce its

proportional contribution to Gest spending.

The Budget also brought authorities a surprise £1.3bn over the life of the Parliament to tackle the backlog of repairs on school buildings.

Hospital building goes private

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government has given the go ahead for 12 hospitals to be built and run by the private sector with private finance for use by NHS patients.

The hospitals, costing £1.3bn, will be staffed by NHS doctors and nurses, but the buildings will be owned by the private sector and leased back to the NHS.

Ministers could not say how much the leasing would cost, but insisted that it was the best deal for the taxpayer. Alan Milburn, the Health Minister, made it clear that future hospital building will depend on similar private finance initiatives. He said the projects announced yesterday are ushering in a new era for the NHS.

"Now it is PFI or bust," he said.

The 12 schemes are the biggest capital programme in the history of the NHS and the money comes on top of an extra £1.3bn for the NHS for next year announced in the Budget by the Chancellor.

Ministers are resisting demands for more money for the current financial year, in spite of discovering that their deficits now total more than £300m, but officials said the allocation of the additional money would be made earlier than usual, around

October, to enable hospitals to plan ahead to avoid the threatened winter crisis.

The approved PFI schemes include three new hospitals near Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency, in North Durham, Bishop Auckland and South Tynes. Denying there was any connection, Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, said only two hospitals had been built in the north east in the last 20 years under the Tories.

A second wave of schemes, which failed to meet the Government criteria, will be launched next Spring.

In all, 23 were rejected, including projects at the famous "Jimmy's" in Leeds - St James's University Hospital NHS Trust, and a new hospital costing £29m at Stone Grove for the Central Sheffield NHS Trust. They will be told to stop work on their contracts, although they will be reconsidered for the second wave in the New Year.

The 12 projects approved are: North Durham, South Buckinghamshire, Calderdale, Carlisle, Hereford, Wellhouse, Worcester, Bishop Auckland, South Manchester, South Tynes, Swindon and Bromley.

Two other private schemes, for Norwich and Norfolk and at Dartford and Gravesham, were approved earlier by the Government.

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Andrew Marshall on Burton Group's decision that followed yesterday's *Independent* report

The Burton Group said that it was severing its business links with Burma yesterday, immediately before a BBC *Newsnight* documentary was due to document its ties to the country.

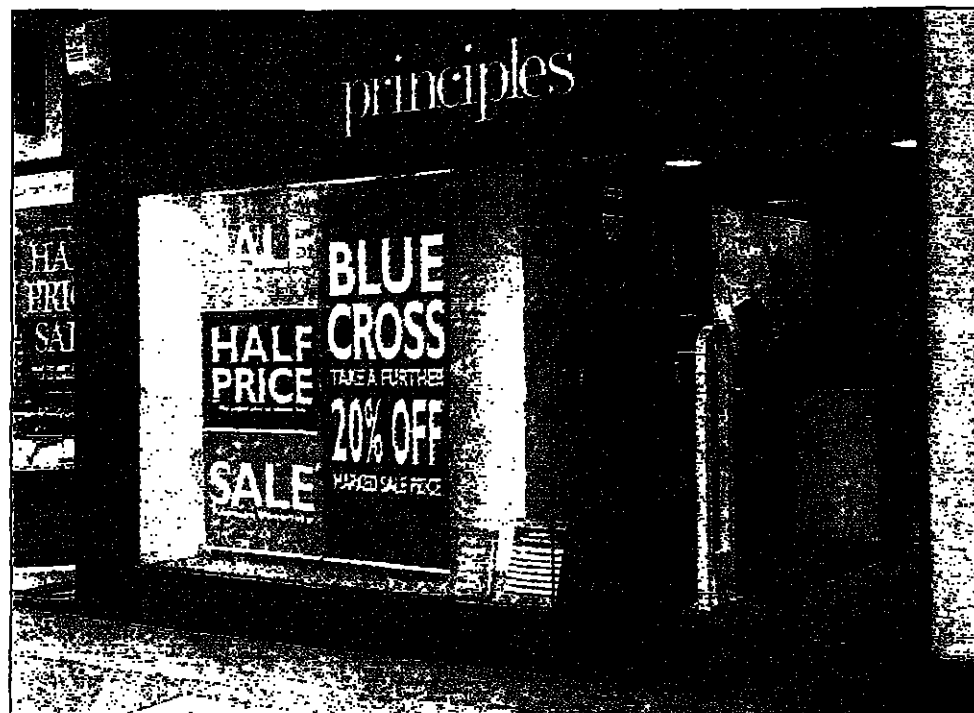
The Burton Group has today instructed its suppliers to place no further contracts for sourcing from Burma, and to terminate all existing contracts by no later than the end of this year, said a statement. "It is the Burton Group's policy to listen to its customers and this decision has been taken following a review of customer opinion towards merchandise sourced from Burma."

The Burton Group, one of

Britain's largest retailers, owns Burton Menswear, Debenhams, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, Topshop and Top Man, and Principles.

The *Independent* reported yesterday that Burton was one of several British companies which sourced its clothes from Burma. However, a spokesperson for the company said that the timing of the pull-out was completely unrelated to either the report in *The Independent* or the BBC programme, set to be broadcast last night.

Instead, they said that it was the result of comment from customers, who had expressed unhappiness with the policy of



New clothes: Burton Group, owners of Principles stores, says it is responding to concerns over Burma, where the junta benefits from child labour

buying from Burma. "We have a policy of listening to our customers," the spokesperson reiterated.

Aung San Suu Kyi won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her

non-violent campaign for democracy in Burma, a year after the opposition, led by her National League for Democracy, won parliamentary elections. The ruling military

council never honoured the result.

The Burma Action Group said that the announcement was very good news. It has mounted a letter-writing campaign against Burton's invest-

ment, and regarded this as a success. "It goes to show that UK consumers are increasingly ethical consumers," said Yvette Mahon, co-ordinator of the

group. "This sends a very strong signal to the military in Burma of increasing world isolation." According to official Burmese figures, Britain is in second place after Singapore in

the league table of investors in Burma, with over \$600m (£400m) of British investment money invested last year. Most of this is accounted for by stakes in the gas and oil sector, but there is also considerable interest in buying garments from the country, one of the world's lowest cost suppliers.

Many American companies have already retreated from Burma. When it left the country, the jeans manufacturer Levi Strauss said: "Under current conditions, it is not possible to do business in Burma without directly supporting the military government and its pervasive violations of human rights."

The Government said yesterday it would consider signing a number of international human rights accords as part of its commitment to make human rights a central goal of its foreign policy, *Reuters* reports. Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd told 20 human rights organisations that the Government planned to launch a major review of its international human rights policy.

In particular, it would examine whether to accede to protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

significant shorts

Bosnian Serb president dissolves parliament

The Bosnian Serb president yesterday dissolved parliament, which is dominated by her rivals - allies of the war-crime suspect Radovan Karadzic. But the legislature was likely to defy her and further escalate tensions. Mrs Plavsic said her decree was justified because "the functioning of legal order... is in a serious crisis in almost all fields." She said the police were "organising criminal activities", she was being ignored by the government, and parliament had been "carrying out orders from the informal centres of power" - an allusion to Mr Karadzic. Parliament is scheduled to meet today in Karadzic's mountain stronghold of Pale, east of Sarajevo.

AP - Belgrade

Fears grow for Nigerian poll

The postponement of elections has Nigerian opposition groups questioning whether the military regime will keep its promise to cede power to civilians next year. General Sani Abacha promised in 1995 to return power to civilians on 1 October 1998. On Wednesday, his Transition Implementation Council set presidential and gubernatorial elections were set for 1 August 1998. It was the first time a date for the presidential vote had been announced, but General Abacha had said earlier that governors for the country's 30 states and one federal territory would be elected late this year.

AP - Lagos

Forces' gay ruling challenged

The US Justice Department will appeal against a federal judge's ruling that the armed forces "don't ask, don't tell" policy violates gays' rights to equal participation in national defence. In New York, District Judge Eugene Nickerson has ruled that a military "called on to fight for the principles of equality and free speech embodied in the United States Constitution should embrace those principles in its own ranks". The issue is expected to be decided eventually by the Supreme Court.

AP - Washington

Japan scales down oil disaster

Embarrassed officials said the oil spill from the *Daiichi* Grace supertanker in Tokyo Bay, initially thought to be of record proportions, was only one-tenth the size previously estimated. They also said human error appeared to be responsible for the incident, in which the supertanker ran over a reef in shallow water. Officials had estimated the spill at 13,400 tonnes, which would have made it the biggest ever in Japan. Yesterday, however, they revised it to 1,315 tonnes.

Reuters - Yokohama

Saudi step to democracy

A Saudi-owned newspaper said Saudi Arabia would raise the number of delegates in its consultative Shura Council to 90 from 60, expanding popular participation in the country's first representative body.

Reuters - Dubai

In-flight exposure

He was caught with his pants down in a lavatory during a transatlantic flight but insists he is innocent. Raviv Laor says he was not sneaking a smoke. Now he is suing Air France for \$12m (£7m) after he was dragged from the lavatory with his trousers around his ankles and toilet paper in his hand. Mr Laor claims a flight attendant wrongly thought he was smoking after a malfunctioning smoke alarm went off.

AP - New York

Mafia bomber arrested

Gaspere Spatuzza, one of Italy's most sought-after Mafia killers who was wanted for a series of 1993 bombings that killed 10 people, has been arrested, police said. Investigators say Spatuzza played a leading role in organising car bomb attacks in Milan, Rome and Florence that killed 10 people in 1993. The bombs also damaged Florence's Uffizi Gallery and two churches in Rome in the same period.

Reuters - Palermo



Accused of car bombing: Police escorting Gaspere Spatuzza in Palermo yesterday Photograph: Reuters

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سكزا من الامم

Countdown begins to handover of China's next outpost

Sue Crawshaw
Macau

Three 17-year-old boys had just finished playing squash. An extraordinary way of spending a rainy afternoon, you might think. Except for one unusual circumstance. They had just stepped out of the arrivals hall at the airport between the Portuguese colony of Macau and the People's Republic of China. The boys live in Macau. They had just crossed into the neighbouring Communist country for their game. It is cheaper to book their weekly squash game in China than in Macau.

In short: reunification between Macau and mainland China has already begun, even if it is not official. Soon it will be. Now the British handover of Hong Kong is complete, attention is already turning to the next change of the guard. The

handover date is 20 December 1999. The Chinese government is planning to install a Macau countdown clock in Tiananmen Square, similar to the Hong Kong clock which stopped on Monday night.

Macau is a rundown kind of place. It has some lurking charm in some of its half-Mediterranean corners — balustraded balconies, succored mansions, restaurants serving vinho verde, even an abundance of Mediterranean-style mopeds. But it has less self-confident vibrancy than nearby Hong Kong.

Above all, it is famous for gambling, which is by far the biggest earner — bringing in half the colony's income. Many of the casinos are open 24 hours. Hotel shuttle buses take guests to the casino from early morning to late at night.

The entire territory — the peninsula with the main town,



Riding high: People in Macau are looking forward to rejoining the People's Republic, but will be keeping a watchful eye on developments in Hong Kong
Photograph: David Rose

and two islands, joined by bridges to the mainland — is much smaller than Hong Kong, with a population of 400,000 as opposed to Hong Kong's 6 million. But just as great a contrast is the difference in political climate. Hong Kong has become a place of political drama. In Macau, there has been little hint of rebellion. As one government official noted: "In Hong Kong the concept of

democracy is so popular. Here, life is so calm."

Macau was always an odd kind of colony. Unlike Hong Kong, it was never seized by force. In the 16th century, the Portuguese simply moved in. Strictly speaking, it is not even a Portuguese colony but "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration". The fine distinction will become even finer after 1999, when Macau, like

Hong Kong, will be a "special administrative region" of the People's Republic with a "high degree of autonomy".

What that means is anybody's guess — just as in Hong Kong, 40 miles across the water. Officially everybody in Macau is keen on the impending changes. There were "turn-of-the-century" celebrations in Macau this week and a chanted countdown to Monday midnight

in the central square. Officials are keen to emphasise the easy relationship with China — with none of the frictions that have bedevilled the relationship between London and Beijing, and especially between Chris Patten in Government House and the Chinese government.

But there is nervousness, too, in this sleepy place. Portugal has always had a much more arm's length relationship

with its colony than Britain with Hong Kong. After the revolution of 1974, the new Socialist government in Lisbon even tried to give the territory back. The Chinese answer: "Don't call us, we'll call you."

Unlike Hong Kong, Macau has made little progress towards fully democratic elections — though officials point out it has moved steadily in the right direction. The first limited

changes in the election rules were introduced more than 20 years ago, horrifying those who ran Hong Kong at the time, who believed nominations and appointments were the best way to choose a legislative council.

As in Hong Kong, people are proud to feel they will be united with their fellow Chinese. In the words of Edgar Chu, a textile manufacturer: "People are looking forward to it. 1997 [in Hong Kong] is a very good sign for Macau. Everything is running smoothly. The people of Hong Kong and Macau just want a good life, and want to maintain things as they are."

But there is wariness. "In two years we'll be part of China, so we're happy," says Jaffe Lei, a student of marketing. "But I feel worried, because I don't know what will happen. If things go badly in Hong Kong, that's what we must watch."

Already, some in Macau are watching nervously. They already know Peking is capable of changing its mind on crucial issues. Macau government publications boast: "No Chinese troops will be stationed here." This week, however, a Chinese spokesman appeared to question that statement, causing a little flurry of concern. "I was scared to see tanks coming into Hong Kong, on the television. If that happened here, it would be terrible," said one woman in Macau this week. "As a Chinese person, I will celebrate [1999]. But I have to struggle with myself, because I'm a little scared."

Taiwan repulses motherland's grasp

Richard Lloyd Parry
Taipei

Taiwan's president, Lee Teng hui, vigorously denied the suggestion of his Communist rival, resident Jiang Zemin, that Taiwan will eventually follow Hong Kong into union with the Communist government of China.

"I would like to take this historic opportunity to solemnly proclaim that Taiwan is not 'Frog Kong'," he said at a reception held for foreign journalists in Taipei yesterday. "The determination and achievements of the 21.5 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan, in their pursuit of democracy and defence of freedom cannot be ignored or negated. We shall never give up our democratic institutions."

Yesterday's event was clearly intended to counteract remarks made by President Jiang at the ceremony marking the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese rule on Tuesday. There, Mr Jiang

promised to "unswervingly promote peaceful reunification of the motherland in accordance with the principle of 'one country, two systems'... eventually resolving the Taiwan question". Since then, Taiwan's leaders have insisted that until Peking embarks on democratic reforms, reunification is out of the question.

Taiwan has trade and investments worth tens of billions of dollars with Hong Kong; under British rule, the colony also served as a station for indirect trade between Taiwan and the Communist mainland. To the relief of many in Taipei, the new chief executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee Hwa, had a meeting yesterday with Koo Chen Fu, Taiwan's representative on relations with the mainland.

Technically, the meeting was "private"; Communist officials insisted that all contacts between Hong Kong and Taiwan must be approved by Peking.

Taiwan has been divided from the mainland since 1949 when

the forces of the nationalist Kuomintang fled there after they were defeated in the civil war by the Communist People's Liberation Army. The Republic of China, as Taiwan's rulers insist on referring to it, has long claimed it is the legitimate Chinese government.

Peking regards Taiwan as a breakaway province and more and more countries have transferred diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Peking. Britain took the step in 1950 but until this week, Taipei's official position was that Hong Kong should be restored to Taiwanese sovereignty.

Taiwan has offered to engage in talks with Peking on an equal footing, but so far has been snubbed. "A model on the lines of Hong Kong and Macau is by no means acceptable," said Lien Chan, Taiwan's vice president and prime minister yesterday. "Unification must be accomplished on the basis of freedom, democracy and equal distribution of wealth."



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international



Poll position: Albanians take cover in a park in front of the central electoral building in Tirana yesterday as shooting erupted after monarchists, demanding a revision of poll results, marched from a nearby square. Photograph: Reuters

Jospin targets rich for emergency tax

John Lichfield
Paris

The most profitable French companies, and the wealthiest French individuals, face an emergency tax levy later this year to help France qualify for the European single currency.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the finance minister, said yesterday that a "light" levy on business and individuals may be necessary if the state of public finances proves to be worse than expected. An audit is due to be completed in two weeks' time.

His comments provoked anger in the business community and among centre-right politicians, who pointed out that the Socialists had campaigned during the election in May on a promise not to raise taxes. They had also campaigned on a promise to keep their promises.

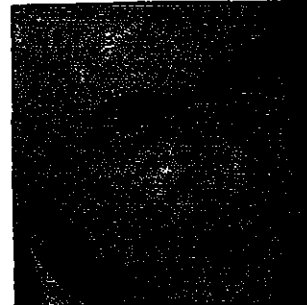
Government spokesmen re-

torted that this was not true: the Socialists had pledged not to raise the standard, compulsory level of taxation. Mr Strauss-Kahn was suggesting a one-off levy. This would only apply if the budget deficit this year seemed to be hopelessly wide of the guideline - 3 per cent of GDP - laid down for membership of the single currency.

The French government has already let it be known that it expects to miss this target but hopes that Germany and other EU governments will accept 3.4 or 3.5 per cent as a near miss.

The emergency levy would apply if the estimated deficit was even higher (which seems likely).

To add to the confusion, the government itself seemed unclear who might be stung by such a tax. François Hollande, the first secretary of the Socialist Party, said on Wednesday that it would apply only to compa-



Strauss-Kahn: 'A light levy'

nies which had been "the most prosperous" in recent years. Catherine Trautmann, the official government spokeswoman, suggested it might apply to any company which had "made profits". Mr Strauss-Kahn extended the net yesterday to the "wealthiest families".

The row was a further embarrassment for the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, who gave a television interview to explain how he intended to keep an apparently contradictory set of election pledges.

Mr Jospin asked, in effect, not to be judged on his first month, or his first year, in office. He said he had been given a five-year mandate and would keep his promises by the end of that period.

Mr Jospin remains popular and most French people seem ready to extend his period of grace. His core problem is his promise to respect all his promises, which has tangled the government in ever more complex schemes of sophistry.

The decision last week not to reverse the closure of the Renault factory in Belgium seemed a direct breach of promise to reopen the case. Mr Jospin said he had promised only to "reopen the dossier", not to force a difficult decision.

The vague commitment greater EU emphasis on growth and jobs at the summit in Amsterdam fell short of the campaign pledge to push the wide European single currency policy in a new, more reticent direction. Yes, said Mr Jospin, but it is just a first step.

The tax row brings him to even more hazardous territory. To meet the EMU guidelines and honour spending pledges, Mr Jospin needs the economy to grow faster than the current annual estimate of 2 per cent. But any suggestion of his government will be anti-business and anti-profit could undermine investment and business confidence and, therefore, growth.

Thank God for O-level history and Russian nostalgia

It takes nerves of steel just to have a drink in the bar of the Hotel Tajikistan. This establishment, in the heart of its eponymous country's capital, Dushanbe, is a byword for awfulness among the handful of Western travellers unfortunate enough to have to stay here - a typical Soviet-era monolith, with the usual scanty and inedible food, surly service, dysfunctional telephones and televisions and life-threatening lifts.

What gives the place its special flavour, however - and in the bar most of all - are the officers of the 201 Russian peace-keeping division. Russia still commands about 20,000 troops along the southern border with Afghanistan, and when not on border duty these officers reside on the hotel's top two floors. Their tours of duty can last for years: many are half-crazed with boredom.

At that time I hadn't heard the story of the drunken major who hired a prostitute and then, enraged by his vodka-induced impotence, emasculated himself with a pistol shot. But the peace deal that will put an end to Tajikistan's five-year civil war is still unsigned, which means Dushanbe is still subject to a self-imposed curfew. The evenings can be long. One night, attracted by the sound of Russian drinking songs from down the hall, I went to investigate.

Inside, the singing turned out to be from an old tape recorder running at maximum volume. Adjusting my eyes to the almost total absence of light, I negotiated my way around three young men who were swaying dangerously in the middle of the floor and asked the barman for a beer. He shook his head: "Niet beer. Only vodka."

He slapped a dirty tumbler on the bar top and sloshed vodka into it from a bottle marked Cossack. There were no pub measures here. I took a sip - it was lukewarm and smelled not unlike cleaning fluid - and retreated to a dark corner table that was sticky with dirt.

The three dancing men followed my movements closely: the only two other customers in the bar got up from their table by the door and left. The incomprehensible drinking song blared on, jangly and abrasive. Then one of the dancers sat down opposite and stared at me for a long time. He didn't speak. From time to time he swigged from a bottle of Cossack, throwing it back like it was nothing at all. I offered him a cigarette: he took it with a cruel smile, on me, finally insisting that I join them in a mad spinning dance among the tables and chairs. The barman looked on, bored and oblivious and for the first time in my life I thanked God for O-level history.

It happened to be Remembrance Day in Dushanbe: car-

DUSHANBE DAYS

lier there had been a parade honour of the fallen of the Second World War. They still take such things seriously in the former Soviet Union. Many of the bystanders were in tears as veterans shuffled by, stooped beneath the weight of medals on shrunken chests. And so I see the only possible answer (this question: that I was English and that since he was a Russian I knew I was among friends).

The soldier was non-impressed. "You're a foreigner," he said, spitting on the floor. "All foreigners are filth. All this is your fault."

What's my fault? He waved angrily around the room, but he meant everything - the dinginess or the bar, the dearth of his life in the army, perhaps even the collapse of the Soviet Union itself. It crossed my mind that he, too, was a foreigner in Tajikistan, but it was hardly the moment to point that out. He could not have been more than 24. And then his friends came to join in collapsing heavily into the sea and blocking all chance of escape.

"All foreigners are filth," said the soldier. "And all this is your fault."

cape. "We were allies 50 years ago," I said carefully. "Your country and my country defeated Hitler together."

He swore and brought his face to within an inch of mine. "You have no idea how we suffered," he hissed. "No idea at all."

"That's not true," I countered. "Everyone in my country knows what happened at Stalingrad. Russian resistance there turned the tide of the war. It was heroic. My country - no, wait, the entire world is indebted. For ever."

At this the other two roared with approval. The first soldier looked put out, muttering that he still reckoned all foreigners were filth. Then I understood: he was from Volgograd, the former Stalingrad. He said exactly the right thing. His friends slapped my shoulder and forced on me, finally insisting that I join them in a mad spinning dance among the tables and chairs. The barman looked on, bored and oblivious and for the first time in my life I thanked God for O-level history.

JJ Fergusson

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noisy offspring with a tweak of the volume button. And because Top Gear won't be the only ones to covet the Fiat Brava ELX, the car is fitted with an alarm and a Fiat CODE immobiliser. It means that only you and your sprogs can enjoy the refined 1.6 or sporty 1.8 engines. (Alternatively, you could plumb for the 1.9 turbo diesel if you want to save money fast.) 1997's Top Family Car can be yours from just £11,070, on the road. All Bravas are also available with Fiat's Flexible Ensign, which offers a host of unique ways to drive a new Fiat. So what family car will get your vote? The one that's better than your kid's friend's dad's car, of course. Call 0800 71 7000, <http://www.fiat.co.uk> or visit your local Fiat dealer for more information.

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Mary Dejevsky
Washington

This time last year Americans were basking in the reflected glory of *Independence Day*, a cinematic *War of the Worlds* for the Nineties, in which the US led Planet Earth to victory over diabolical space invaders to the strains of the national anthem. Tonight, as celebratory fireworks light the sky "from sea to shining sea", that triumphalist version of Independence Day will seem almost real.

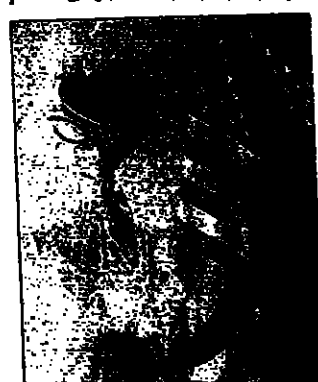
After nearly a decade of introspection following the explosion of the shuttle *Challenger*, America is rediscovering space as a field of patriotic endeavour, and a leaner, wiser Nasa is on its way to rehabilitation. One sign of the new confidence has been the billing of today's planned landing on Mars by the *Pathfinder* spaceship. All being well, its parachute-slown landing will be shown live on television, with the peeling open of its sides and the

ducers can intersperse them with sharp images broadcast live, by a new technique, from the space shuttle *Columbia*, which defied a thunderstorm to launch earlier this week and is now in orbit. News bulletins show astronauts floating around their capsule in images that could come from a Cold War propaganda film. The contrast between this and the daily more pessimistic bulletins on the crippled *Mir* Russian space-station could not be greater.

Back at home, life is imitating space come to Earth in the New Mexico town of Roswell, whose population trebled this week for a UFO fest to mark the 50th anniversary of an event (real or mythical) that put it on the map. To believers, who include former Pentagon official Philip Corso, whose recent book was judged damaging enough for the Air Force to issue a 230-page rebuttal, it is not only earthlings who are attracted by Roswell's charms. Col Corso and the others know a team of little grey men took to their flying saucer back in 1947 but crashed a few miles outside the town some time around Independence Day.

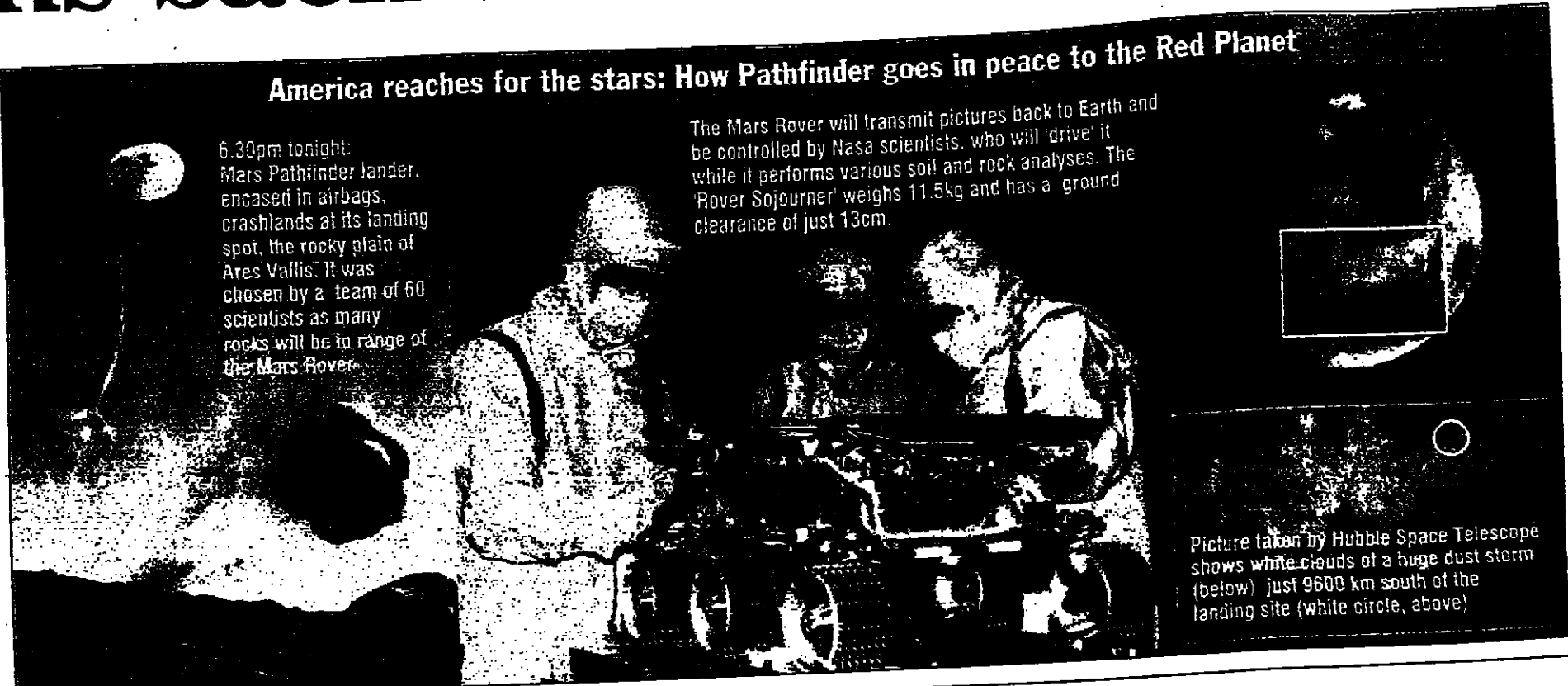
Col Corso, whose deadpan style and rank lend authority to his story, says the military not only spirited the wreckage away and lied to the public but also exploited the aliens' technology. Lasers, cyber-optics and the Stealth bomber are among the results, he says. Always, though, it has been the fate of the "aliens" as much as the innovative spaceship or the alleged official cover-up that has worried Americans. Whether or not the creatures existed, there is a general feeling that America did badly by them.

This Independence Day, the spirit of believers at Roswell and televiewing followers of *Pathfinder* will be a charitable: "We come in peace". Americans, however, still do not trust the government to deliver that message. While an anniversary survey showed 35 per cent of those asked accepted that aliens landed at Roswell, a bare 25 per cent said they believed last week's denial by the Air Force.



Alien nation: A display in Roswell, the US UFO capital

emergence of a small robot designed to plot the terrain. After a seven-month journey, *Pathfinder* should make its arrival in time for brunch in New York and breakfast in Los Angeles, the first Earth visitor to Mars since the *Viking* missions of the Seventies. As one newspaper put it, luxuriating in the anticipated spectacle, Mars will be "invaded by Earth". If the pictures transmitted from the Red Planet are fuzzy or intermittent, television pro-



America reaches for the stars: How Pathfinder goes in peace to the Red Planet

6.30pm tonight: Mars Pathfinder lander, encased in airbags, crashlands at its landing spot, the rocky plain of Ares Vallis. It was chosen by a team of 60 scientists as many rocks will be in range of the Mars Rover.

The Mars Rover will transmit pictures back to Earth and be controlled by Nasa scientists, who will drive it while it performs various soil and rock analyses. The 'Rover Sojourner' weighs 11.5kg and has a ground clearance of just 13cm.

Picture taken by Hubble Space Telescope shows white clouds of a huge dust storm (below) just 9600 km south of the landing site (white circle, above)



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solution

Blind find little to laugh at in myopic Magoo



Don't see the joke: Mr Magoo and General Halftrack

David Osborne
New York

Cartoonists may be the last to get the message and they will not much like it. In Nineties America, funny is not funny when it is politically incorrect. None in the industry is exempt, including the Disney Company.

There were squeals of shock last month when a cartoonist for the *Arizona Republic* offered his version of perhaps the most famous news picture from the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, that of a fireman in the rubble bearing a tiny infant killed in the blast.

So upsetting to some was the drawing, published to coincide with the death penalty sentence against Timothy McVeigh, that the editor was moved the next day to publish an apology.

Meant as a jab against against capital punishment, it labelled the fireman "death penalty fanatics" and had the child pleading, "Please, no more killing". The fireman was replying: "Oh, stop your whining".

Now Disney is getting the same lesson. It is under fierce attack for its planned release next Christmas of a feature film starring actor Leslie Nielsen playing the long-retired cartoon character, Mr Magoo.

Mr Magoo is the perfect vehicle, you might think, for Americans in the post-war years. Magoo was famously bungling and hopelessly myopic. Comic to most of us; offensive to blind people.

Thus this week, the National Federation of the Blind has de-

manded that Disney suspend production of the film. It is also asking its 50,000 members to consider forgoing Disney products until the company complies.

"The Disney people have dragged Mr Magoo back from richly-deserved obscurity in the hope that Americans will think it's funny to watch an ill-tempered and incompetent blind man stumble into things and misunderstand his surroundings," said Marc Maurer, president of the organisation.

Disney, which recently also got hit by calls for a boycott by the Southern Baptist Church because of its alleged promotion of homosexuality, shows no sign of acquiescing to the demand, saying the film "does not in any way make fun or demean blind people".

Even Mr Magoo would not have to squint to see other instances of political correctness invading the cartoon world. This week came news that a character in the nationally syndicated *Beetle Bailey* strip, a lecherous army officer named General Amos Halftrack, will shortly be depicted attending "sensitivity training". Thus, it is hoped, the general will overcome his urge to gawp at the bosom of his secretary, a Miss Buxley. The cartoon's creator, Mort Walker, 73, agreed to the storyline, which aptly reflects the anguish over gender confusions in the real US Army, after seeing that newspapers were dropping his cartoon because of the general.

All this is going on in a country that stays up late at night to watch re-runs of *Benny Hill* as he cavorts across lawns in pursuit of perky nurses.

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obituaries / gazette

James Stewart

In view of how secure a fixture he was destined to become in the American cinema, it is now perhaps difficult to understand what an awkward proposition James Stewart represented to casting directors at the beginning of his career in the 1930s. He was tall, gangling and lack-lustre, possessed of a slow and almost caricatured drawing delivery that sounded as though, before finally emerging, his voice had to make a complete tour of the inside of his mouth; there was even a suspicion of a wisp or two of straw in his chronically unkempt hair.

If such types were common enough as supporting performers in westerns and rural melodramas, they had generally been denied access to true stardom. Stewart nevertheless became and remained a star, achieving prominence in a wide variety of genres. Moreover, in a career spanning over four decades, he appeared to age as naturally and reassuringly as a member of one's own family.

Although his original country-boy bashfulness and tendency to say "Shucks!" a lot – Stewart was born in the small town of Indiana, Pennsylvania, the son of a hardware store owner – were soon smoothed out in the sophisticated comedies and thrillers in which he was later to make a reputation, they never entirely disappeared. When, in consequence, he was allowed to reveal his true, unsuspected depths of character, and his candid blue eyes were invested with an uncharacteristic steeliness (notably, under such directors as Alfred Hitchcock and Anthony Mann), the contrast between the psychological intensity of which he proved capable and the casual behavioural charm which came so naturally to him seemed all the more disturbing.

Stewart won his sole Oscar as a cynical newspaper reporter at first contemptuous of, then bewitched by, the antics of the patrician set in George Cukor's *The Philadelphia Story* (1940). Yet his most memorable work resulted from close collaborations with a trio of very different film-makers: Frank Capra, Mann and Hitchcock.

As a director, Capra could fairly be described as Stewart's equivalent behind the camera: he was folksy, shrewd and basically conservative. In the first of their three films together, a 1938 adaptation of the Kaufman and Hart farce *You Can't Take It With You*, Stewart played a minor but pivotal role as the son of a wealthy, stuffily pompous family who is about to marry into a household of eccentricities. It was not until *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), however, that their ideally matched talents properly cohered.

As a country-lawyer candidate confronted with the rapacious chicanery of politicians on the make, as an individual coming to the rescue of the system rather than vice versa (invariably the case with Capra's ultimately reactionary brand of sentimental populism), he embodied to perfection the "common-man" ideology of one of the American cinema's great naïve communicators. (Ironically, at the height of the Watergate débâcle, Stewart, now an ageing, superpatriotic movie star, once more went to Washington to offer the embattled President Nixon his disheartening and somewhat ill-timed support.) And in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), Capra's masterpiece, he was emblematically cast as a small-town businessman discovering, on the brink of suicide, just how essential he – and, by implication, his type – had always been to the defence and preservation of the American Way of Life.

With Anthony Mann, Stewart's participation was instrumental in a cycle of surprisingly complex and resonant westerns, from *Winchester 73* in 1950 to *The Man from Laramie* in 1955. In these he played an obsessive, almost Chandalierian loner, except that it was not mean, dark city streets that he stalked but some of the most spectacular, and spectacularly filmed, landscapes of the American hinterland. The partnership proved less successful – although, in strictly commercial terms, even more popular – when it strayed from Hollywood's most elemental genre into the musical biography (*The Glenn Miller Story*, 1954) and the militaristic melodrama (*Strategic Air Command*, 1955). Stewart himself, it is worth noting, had led more than a thousand plane strikes over Germany in the Second World War, winning both the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

But it was Hitchcock who most keenly explored the possibility of a troubled psyche lurking just beneath Stewart's easy-going surface, and the four films which they made together figure among the best of both artists. In the first, *Rope* (1948), based on Patrick Hamilton's stage drama about a pair of motiveless young "thrill" murderers, the subtlety and intelligence of Stewart's performance were heightened by the director's virtuoso "10-minute take" technique, which virtually dispensed

with editing. *Rear Window* (1954) found Stewart, as a photojournalist confined with a broken leg to a wheelchair ("an American in plaster-of-Paris", as someone once wisecracked), acting out the spectator's own voyeuristic fantasies through his fascination with the multiplicity of "screens" offered him by the courtyard windows that are all he can see from his apartment.

The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) was a more conventional chase thriller, in which it might be said that Stewart played a Capra character marooned in a Hitchcock movie. *Vertigo* (1958), on the other hand, remains one of the finest, most nightmarishly magical of all American films, and Stewart gave an unforgettable performance as a mentally unbalanced cop-policeman hured not once but twice, to his doom by a frosty and near-somnambulistic Kim Novak.

In the Sixties he made three variously memorable John Ford westerns, *Two Rode Together* (1961), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Bells* (1962) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964). But, with one stand-out exception, his late appearances represented not much more than a postscript to an exceptionally distinguished filmography. That exception, though – his portrait of a crafty, laconic, deceptively bumbling small-town lawyer in Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) – offered not merely a distillation of the screen persona he had built up over the years but a nostalgic reprise of the unassuming but unshakable moral values of the original *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*.

Gilbert Adair

From the pulsating jazz of Duke Ellington and the jazzy credit titles designed by Saul Bass, *Anatomy of a Murder* provided its modernity, writes Adrian Turner. No ordinary courtroom drama this, for it delves into a case of rape and murder and offers a pair of freshly laundered, though torn, ladies' panties as visible evidence.

In 1959, this was hot stuff, as was medical testimony about spermatozoa, contraception and sexual climax. In view of this, the judge warns everyone in the courtroom (and the cinema, too) that any snickering will not be tolerated. After all, a man's life is at stake.

In the thick of things is James Stewart at his most Jimmy Stewarthish. As the small-town defence lawyer Paul Begley – Folly to his friends – Stewart roots the film in integrity and when he gingerly handles the



James Stewart at his most Jimmy Stewarthish, right in Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder*, 1947

Photograph: Picturegoer

panties and talks of sperm no one snickers. Perhaps not even Gregory Peck could have carried that off as well. However, Stewart did receive letters from fans saying he should not have accepted such a grubby role.

The part might have been specifically written for him. But it wasn't. The novel by Robert Traver – the *nom de plume* of John Voelker, a retired judge – was an immediate best-seller, the *Preminger* of its day. Always on the lookout for *risqué* material, the producer-director Otto Preminger snapped up the screen rights, filmed it entirely on location and had the edited film ready only three weeks after shooting ended.

Preminger was a big-game hunter who stalked the Major Themes of Our Time (justice in *Anatomy of a Murder*, democracy in *Advise and Consent*, drug addiction in *The Man with the Golden Arm*, Israeli nationalism in *Exodus*, the Catholic Church in *The Cardinal*) and turned them all into gripping

melodramas, notable for their visual flourishes and their performances as much as their thematic "daring".

Stewart's character is single, wedded only to the law and to fishing. There is no proof of emotional repression, though Stewart hints at a past that remains forever a locked room – why, for example, did he resign as a District Attorney? He has a secretary (Eve Arden) who ribs him about her pay-checks (he spends all the legal fees on fishing tackle) and a soused sidekick. But, as with many of his roles, he is a loner.

He also brings with him the idealism of *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*, the small-town innocence of *It's a Wonderful Life*, the daydreamer of *Harvey*, the gullibility of *The Philadelphia Story*, the vulnerability of *Rear Window*.

Stewart brought a simple quality to his pictures. Audiences trusted him, they liked his lanky, drawing character and his awkwardness with women.

In *Anatomy of a Murder* he finds himself both repelled by and attracted to Lee Remick, the flirtatious and apparent rape victim whose jealous soldier husband, Ben Gazzara, goes out and shoots the rapist, the manager of the local bar. Remick wears tight sweaters, slacks and no girdle. She is the very image of the post-Kinsey American woman – not a fantasy figure like Monroe, but palpably real. Stewart has first to get rape on the agenda for the trial and then avoid the inevitable accusation that Remick was asking for it anyway (the movie surely provided the inspiration for the Jodie Foster picture *The Accused*).

If Remick represents the new open sexuality of America, George C. Scott (in his first major role) represents another kind of "progress": Scott is the big-city District Attorney sent to demolish the country hick Stewart's slick, reptilian eloquence versus Stewart's dogged, holy tenacity – provides one of the film's

greatest pleasures as well as supporting its underlying theme:

Beneath the film's plot – its duplicitous and patented "shock" witness whose revelation makes Scott nearly faint with wounded pride – is a parable about the wider morality of America. The actor clearly enjoying himself as the witty judge is Joseph P. Welch, a celebrated Boston lawyer who was an outspoken opponent of the McCarthy witch hunts. Preminger called him "the American conscience" and offered him the part after Spencer Tracy and Burt Lancaster turned it down. Welch's presence, albeit a rather subtle one, conveys the idea that the movie is about tearing down the veils of secrecy, persecution and prudence at the end of the post-war, Eisenhower era. And it was Preminger, of course, who broke the blacklist with his next picture by putting the writer Dalton Trumbo's name on the credits of *Exodus*.

Stewart's presence in this context is crucial. He has stood up for old-fashioned virtues, even as he swims in a virtual cesspool. His level-headed reasoning, his appeal to common humanity, his love of fishing, all correspond to the cosy, comforting image that we have of him. No wonder he wins the case, even if his defence of temporary insanity, or irresistible impulse, is tentative at best and that Gazzara is as sane as the next man. But afterwards, as he goes to collect his fee, he finds that Gazzara and Remick have flown – another case of irresistible impulse. All that is left is a garbage can with a broken shoe hanging on the rim.

Stewart has gone one way and America is headed in another. It was his last really major performance.

James Maitland Stewart, actor: born Indiana, Pennsylvania 20 May 1908; married 1949 Gloria McLean (died 1994; two daughters, one stepson); died Beverly Hills, California 2 July 1997.

Marjorie Linklater



High-spirited: Linklater in a 1933 portrait by Stanley Cursiter

At the height of a furious quarrel with her husband, Marjorie Linklater proclaimed the belief which animated most of her long life. "Why do you keep saying, change is bad?" she demanded. "All change is for the best – even when it's for the worst." Since their arguments were usually conducted with an operative intensity of noise and emotions, the startled silence which followed this thrust indicated that she had won a skirmish if not the war.

On the whole, she remained faithful to her creed throughout her turbulent and ultimately consoling marriage to the writer Eric Linklater and, after his death, in promoting the arts and the environment in Orkney. Indeed, in this last period, when she helped found the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness (home of Margaret Gardner's remarkable collection of 20th-century art), assisted at the birth of the St Magnus Festival and initiated the Johnstones Foy, a celebration of Orkney art, and the Folk Festival, now a magnet for traditional musicians from both sides of the North Sea, she helped stimulate enough change to satisfy even her zest for innovation.

Born in 1909, the youngest daughter of Ian MacIntyre, a flamboyant former rugby international and MP who became an Edinburgh solicitor, she was educated at St George's School, Edinburgh, and Down House in Berkshire, before going to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London. During a short West End career, she was courted by Douglas Jardine, captain of the England XI which won the Ashes during the "Bodyline" series in Australia. The affair was doomed from the moment she found herself briefly ignored at one of his parties. Turning to the man nearest her, who happened to be the legendary batsman C.B. Fry, she said brightly, "I do hope you're not another of those awful cricket boys."

Attractive and high-spirited, she returned to Edinburgh in

1930, and, taking up the first of innumerable causes, campaigned with Michael MacOwen for the establishment of a Scottish National Theatre. There she met Eric Linklater, 10 years her senior, and already a famous author. He admired her beauty, her taste in claret and above all her love of Orkney, his spiritual home, where her family used to take holidays. "Bliss, you," she wrote soon after they were engaged. "If you can't be happy with me, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

In 1933, they married and went to live in Orkney. As well as bringing up a family of four children, she took an enthusiastic part in community life, producing prize-winning dramas and playing her cello – an instrument later traded in for a donkey on the grounds that the latter made a more beautiful noise – in the local orchestra. After the Second World War, the family moved south to Ross-shire, where she became a county councillor, taking particular

pride in getting a secondary school built in Plockton (home of the *Machbeth* television series), and securing the headmaster-ship for the great Gaelic poet Sorley MacLean. Following a successful battle to have public toilets built at popular tourist spots, she also took a certain pleasure in being known as "Ross-shire's lavatory queen".

She and Eric had achieved a surprising harmony before his death in 1974, a quality which helped prompt her return to Orkney. In an interview, she declared "I have decided to give up sex and take up committers." Although this was not strictly true (a long-distance romance with someone in the South later led her to confess, "You can't imagine how exciting it is to travel to meet your lover on a Senior Citizens' Railroad"), her wit and style made her an extremely effective committee worker. As chairman of the Orkney Heritage Society, she persuaded the oil industry to fund a full-time archaeologist to

supervise the islands' phenomenally rich prehistoric heritage, and when the nuclear industry proposed to mine uranium in Orkney, she led a long, successful "No Uranium" campaign against it. This was followed by other contests to stop Dounreay's reckless proposal to dump nuclear waste at sea.

When committees would not work, she took lone action and, aged nearly 80, confronted a farmer who was taking sand from a particularly beautiful beach. Enraged, he drove his digger at her, calling her a bugger and a whore. "Well, make up your mind," she snapped back. "I can't be both."

A fervent Scottish Nationalist, she fought vigorously for the party, distributing pamphlets well into her eighties and providing a local headquarters for her friend Winnie Ewing, the MEP for the Highlands and Islands. Eclectically, she also housed the Natural Law Party's candidate at the last election, and worked with Laura Gri-

mond for the restoration of the eighth-century St Boniface chapel on Papa Westray. Her enthusiasm and sense of comedy attracted to her house in Kirkwall a steady stream of Orkadians dropping in for a blather, as well as Filipino singers, Chilean refugees and Icelandic poets.

Although weakened by cancer and a failing heart, she visited friends on the day she died. Her sudden death that evening, after hours of sunshine and laughter, could be seen as the final proof of her dictum – perhaps even this greatest and worst change might have been for the best.

Andro Linklater

Marjorie MacIntyre, campaigner: born Edinburgh 19 March 1909; married Ross & Cromarty County Council, 1953-69; member, Scottish Arts Council 1957-63; Chairman, Orkney Heritage Society 1977-81; married 1933 Eric Linklater (died 1974; two sons, two daughters); died Kirkwall, Orkney 29 June 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

DICK, George, of Waterford, Rosbrook, Wick, Sussex (Professor Emeritus, London University). Died peacefully on 3 July, just before his 83rd birthday. Loved by all his family, who will miss him. He wished a "family only" funeral. No flowers. Donations to Amnesty International.

SWEET, George, painter, binder, died in Bristol on 29 June 1997, aged 87. Father of Stephanie, grandfather of Lucian. Funeral at Canford Crematorium at 12 noon on Thursday 10 July.

For GAZETTE, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2018.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, will marry the Hon. David Armstrong-Jones, Viscount Linlithgow, on 10 July 1997. The ceremony will take place at St George's Chapel, Windsor. The bride will be wearing a dress designed by Vivienne Westwood. The groom will be wearing a tuxedo designed by John Galiano. The ceremony will be broadcast on television.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment will march in the Queen's 125th birthday celebrations, 11 July. The Regiment will march from the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, to the Horse Guards, Whitehall.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr A. Butler and Miss C.L. MacLaren. The engagement is announced between Andrew, son of Sir Robin and Lady Butler, of Herne Hill, London, and Catriona, daughter of Mr and Mrs Iain MacLaren, of Edinburgh.

Mr S. C. C. Dwyer and Miss O. M. MacSherry. The engagement is announced between Simon, son of the late Mr Harry Dwyer and of Mrs Charity Dwyer, of Ashley Priors, Torquay, Devon, and Orla, daughter of the late Mr John MacSherry and of Mrs Nuala MacSherry, of County Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

Birthdays

Prince Michael of Kent, 55; King Tupaia Tupou IV of Tonga, 79; The Duke of Abercorn, Lord-Lieutenant of County Tyrone, 68; Lord Barber, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, 77; Mr Alec Beeson, cricketer, 79; Mr Eric Beder, cricketer, 79; Dr Roger Berry MP, 49; Mr Alastair Goodall MP, 54; Mr Roy Henderson, baritone, 98; Miss Gina Lollobrigida, actress, 70; The Hon Francis Maude MP, 44; Miss Pam Shriver, tennis player, 35; Mr Neil Simon, playwright, 78; Professor Sir Michael Stoker, former President, Clare Hall, Cambridge, 78.

Mr Colin Welland, actor and playwright, 63; Lord Byron, 11th, 78; former chairman, Horseshoe Totalisator Board, 79.

Anniversaries

Births: Louis Bun Meyer, Hollywood "movie mogul", 1889; Daniel Louis Armstrong, jazz trumpeter and singer, 1900. Deaths: Samuel Richardson, novelist and author of *Pamela*, 1761; Marie Curie (Maria Sklodowska), chemist, 1934. On this day: the American Declaration of Independence was adopted, 1776; Karl Heinrich Marx and Friedrich Engels published the Communist Manifesto, 1848; United States Independence Day in the United States of America and the Feast Day of St Andrew of Crete, St Basil of Bland, St Elizabeth of Portugal, St Otto of Canterbury, St Ulrich of Augsburg and The Martyrs of Dorchester.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 9.00pm.

United Synagogue 0181-343 9969. Federation of Synagogues 0181-262 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain 0181-349 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation 0171-259 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti) 0171-328 1026.

Part-time student was eligible to claim income support

LAW REPORT

4 July 1997

Chief Adjudication Officer for Social Security v Webber; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Hobhouse) 1 July 1997

A person pursuing a part-time modular university course was not a student for the purposes of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987, and was thus eligible to claim income support.

The Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the Social Security Commissioner that the claimant was entitled to income support.

In September 1992 the claimant began a "modular course" at Oxford Brookes University, aiming to achieve a BSc Hons degree. The claimant had begun his studies as a full-time student, but after the first year, because he had failed to pass sufficient modules, the university told him that he could only start as a part-time student in his second year.

He applied for income sup-

port in October 1993. His application was refused by the Adjudication Officer, but his appeal to the Appeal Tribunal was allowed. The Adjudication Officer appealed to the Commissioner, who upheld the Appeal Tribunal's decision.

Rabinder Singh (Solicitor, Department of Social Security) for the Chief Adjudication Officer; *Richard Drabble QC* (Peter Turrill, Oxfordshire Welfare Rights) for the claimant.

Lord Justice Hobhouse said that the question of law raised on the appeal could be shortly stated: whether the claimant was at the material time a student as defined by the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987.

Under section 124 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 it was a requirement of entitlement to income support that the relevant

person be "available for and actively seeking employment". Under regulation 10(1) of the regulations "a claimant shall not be treated as available for employment if... he is a student during the period of study."

In regulation 61 "period of study" was defined as meaning "the period beginning with the start of the course of study and ending with the last day of the course or such earlier date as the student abandons it or is dismissed from it..." Student was defined as "a person... who is attending a full-time course of study... and for the purposes of this definition (a) a person... shall be treated as attending it throughout any period of term or vacation within it..."

The general scheme of the regulations was to identify the status of "student". That status depended upon the categorisation of the course on which

the student was enrolled. The course was required to be a "full-time" course of study.

It had been argued for the claimant that where a course had a variable character, it was necessary to determine the character of the course, whether it was full-time or part-time, at each relevant stage. It had been submitted for the Adjudication Officer that the definition required that the course be categorised at its outset when the student enrolled for it and that once the status of student had been acquired, it was deemed to continue.

A course which did not require full-time attendance could not be described as a full-time course. If the relevant course was not a full-time course then the relevant person never was a student coming within the definition in the Regulations.

Lord Justice Peter Gibson

said that the present case could not be distinguished from *Chief Adjudication Officer v Clarke and Paul* [1995] ELR 259, in which it was held that an intercalated period when the student was not attending a full-time course of study could not fairly be described as a period of either term or vacation within the course in accordance with the definition of "student" in the Regulation 61 (a).

Lord Justice Evans agreed with Lord Justice Peter Gibson, and said that the claimant was also entitled to succeed without relying on the words "throughout any period of term or vacation within it". It was one thing to treat a person as a full-time student at times when, although such a student, he was not in fact attending the course, but quite another thing to rely upon the deeming provision in Regulation 61(a) to create a status as student which did not exist in fact.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Small men, but their poison was powerful

It remains a little bewildering, even now: the "cash for questions" episode has been long drawn-out and horribly damaging for the Conservative Party. But the pettiness of the MPs' greed, and the sheer smallness of their grubby dissimulation is the striking thing. This was not a great case of evil men or grand corruption: it was more the sort of thing we are used to hearing about from Piddlemarsh Borough Council. In a great democratic institution which, within living memory, controlled a huge swathe of the globe, Members of the once-dominant party have been found guilty of behaving like dim and sleazy councillors caught in cahoots with a bent solicitor and a sheepskin-coated developer. For all the fine suits and self-aggrandising rhetoric of Neil Hamilton, Ian Greer and the rest, they have brought the culture of greasy tenners, cheap cheroots and car park biddles to Westminster. Small lies, small kick-backs: small people.

None of it would have come out without the angry anti-Conservative campaign of Mohamed Al Fayed and some very fine journalistic digging, notably by *The Guardian*, whose courage and professionalism in all this we salute. In the dim corners of the Palace of Westminster and its penumbra of up-market restaurants, deals between lobbyists, short-of-cash MPs and nervous companies would have continued to be struck. And in the

House, the paid wire-pulling, masquerading as innocent, public spirited questioning, would have carried on.

Was it in the end so awful? Was it bad enough to stain the collective reputation of Conservative MPs and subject their party, which has done so much to make modern Britain, to the angry derision of the public? After all, as so many of Mr Hamilton's apologists have been so ready to murmur, the level of corruption in France - Belgium - Italy is so much worse. Isn't it really the case that a self-important, arrogant and priggish media has got above itself and hounded fallible, silly but basically harmless men out of public life? This is the counter-accusation being thrown around, most notably in an increasingly bizarre series of attacks on the editor of *The Guardian* by a columnist and confidant of the Prime Minister called Paul Johnson.

The answer is that a culture that condones small lies moves swiftly to big lies, and that a political party whose members pocket modest bribes will start taking big ones. The apple's small spot of corruption will rot the whole barrel. More interesting is the reflection that, had it not been for the accident of the Fayed campaign and the press, neither the Conservative Party nor Parliament would have noticed the problem. John Major's early readiness to side with Mr Hamilton, and his happiness to see the Downey report's



publication delayed, was not only partisan instinct. It was a modest but telling example of the clubby atmosphere of Westminster politics in action. There are Labour MPs whose outrage at media questioning of their conduct has been just as intense. Party politics aside, when it comes to criticisms of their ethics, Honourable Members have tended to hang together.

Yet what happened when the get-rich-quick atmosphere of the Eighties reached Westminster was that the old order of assumed probity and unspoken codes of behaviour simply crumbled. Confident, assertive men in a hurry,

who happened to be Tory MPs rather than merchant bankers, felt they had a right to a share of the action. The interpenetration of business and politics, in a culture of deregulation, lucrative government contracts, privatisations and utter one-party dominance, created a glittering orchard of temptation. Rules were bent, then abandoned. For much of the time, the Labour Party, was so bound up in its own gruesome agonies that the necessary scrutiny was lacking. The old public service culture of Whitehall and Westminster proved utterly unable to defend itself against the likes of Neil Hamilton.

It was not ideal that journalism became the *de facto* opposition to this. The best journalism is informative and sceptical about power, but not, in a democracy, opposed to power. Years of increasing opposition to the Thatcher and Major governments have left some journalists unable to distinguish between independence from politicians and knee-jerk hostility to them. Nevertheless, for a vital few years, the most damaging and useful probing of a governing party that had lost the old rulebook came from reporters and columnists. Without them, there would have been no Nolan report or Downey report, no rethinking of the Commons rules, and no unmasking of individuals. The greasy tinner culture would have spread further into government; the scandals would have been worse.

We hope that that period has now been brought to an end by Sir Gordon Downey and his employers, the MPs themselves. If the politicians have finally determined to take a grip of their own standards and image, then we are all winners. If the new Labour government has learnt, never to forget, the bitter lesson that hundreds of decent, honourable MPs can be tainted in the public mind by a handful of sleazy and protected fools then it need never suffer the Tories' recent agonies.

In a democracy we need to respect the motives and basic sense of public service of people elected to run the

country. Healthy scepticism about politicians is natural and healthy. But cynicism about politics as a trade is a kind of poison. That cynicism has been spread in the past few years by a few silly, greedy men. Sir Gordon's language was tough but necessary. They have let down not only their party, but the political system they were once so proud to represent.

Don't mention the quarter-finals

Well, it was fun while it lasted. Tim Henman (there's only one, so they say) gave us the best nationalistic burn of the tournament last Sunday by feeding off crowd partisanship to win through to the quarter-finals, there to be stuffed comprehensively by a cool, controlled German, Greg Rusedski (are the crowds quite sure he counts?) tried hard, but couldn't make it either. Which just goes to prove you can't have everything, and that justice only comes in small parcels. Hamilton goes down, the Aussies get wiped in a day, so we can't have a Brit in the semi-finals. It's a bit like the Budget really: you get decency with one hand, and a higher mortgage with the other. Something quintessentially British about that, don't you think?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Budget takes tentative green steps

Sir: The Government's moves on domestic energy are disappointing in what was hyped to be a "green" first Budget ("A disappointingly pale shade of green" 3 July).

If the Government is serious about its commitment to carbon dioxide reductions - by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2010 - announced to such acclaim in New York last week, the necessary fiscal policies are needed now.

Instead by reducing domestic energy costs the Chancellor is encouraging energy consumption not energy efficiency - adding to our carbon dioxide emission burden and making job creation in the labour-intensive energy-efficiency sector more difficult.

Labour has previously called for and supported moves to reduce VAT on energy efficient materials in line with the VAT on domestic energy. Yesterday was their opportunity to demonstrate their commitment and yet the Chancellor opted not to take it.

Action, not a wider review, is required to address the UK's carbon dioxide emissions and meet our climate change responsibilities. The Chancellor's first Budget takes tentative first steps where bolder ones were promised and needed.

ROBIN PELLEW
Director
IWWF-UK
Godalming, Surrey

Sir: Your leader (3 July) on the Budget asserts that "being green and political at the same time is a smart trick that no one has quite yet pulled off". But does not the proposed £900m for new and refurbished council houses and the £1.3bn on school building repairs offer just such a chance?

Amory Lovins, guiding light of the Rocky Mountain Institute, has shown how truly "green" buildings can cost less than "normal" constructions. At least one is in Britain. Not only are fuel and running costs dramatically cut but such buildings also provide a stimulating, nourishing environment with natural flows of light and air.

Gordon Brown wants "bright modern classrooms". As well as offering a wonderful environment for children at no extra cost, "green" buildings would stimulate and educate architects, designers and the construction industry to be at the cutting edge of the materials and technologies needed for the next century.

Left to the markets, nothing will happen. Government, with vision, and exercising leadership, however, can create a fast track by setting new standards. It wants to do just this with pupil's achievement. Why not do it also with their environment.

BRUCE TOFIELD
London N21

Sir: Gordon Brown's first Budget is to be welcomed for his proposals to help people with disabilities into work. The injection of £200m over five years into training and other support will help open up the world of work to a part of society that has been constantly marginalised. It is been constantly feeling working for Opportunities, a leading charity in the disability and employment field, to know that the massive contribution that people with disabilities can make to society is being properly recognised.

Opportunities has proved that, by working with people with



Lib Dem women hold power

Sir: I comment on Louise Jury's report on the Fawcett Society's challenge to political parties to "match Labour women's triumph" (30 June).

The Fawcett Society has oversimplified the issue of women's representation. They forget that all-women shortlists were ruled illegal. Mary Ann Stephenson from the Fawcett Society is quoted as saying "it wasn't the fact that Labour did really well that got the women in". Toshi! If they hadn't done so well they wouldn't have so many women MPs.

Fawcett have overlooked the very different cultures within each of the three main parties. Conservative women have to battle with ingrained sexism and prehistoric views.

What Liberal Democrats must do is not a simple question of boosting raw numbers, as implied by Fawcett. There are several issues, for example persuading more of our top women it's worth bothering with Westminster. That when they get there, they will be able to achieve some good. In the past our good women have aimed where our real power lay - local government.

We unfortunately lost three excellent women MPs at the last election: one, Emma Nicholson, stood down to pursue a career in Europe, another, Liz Lynne, lost to a Labour woman and the third, Diana Maddock, achieved an outstanding swing of 18.3 per cent but it was not enough to keep her by-election victory. There were other women Liberal Democrats in "winnable" seats who sadly did not get elected: high quality women like Yvonne Emmerson-Peince in Salisbury (her first seat) or Paula Yates in Dorset North.

As a political party we certainly do not deserve to be castigated on our overall approach to women. The Liberal Democrat general election campaign was positively "feminine-centric".

We were the party that talked about issues, our policies and the effect they would have on real lives. Just as groups like Fawcett advised us women wanted. We published a clear and costed manifesto for women. Our press conferences and rallies promoted women. The campaign was heavily influenced by women.

However, the Women Liberal Democrats have called for a constitutional change to increase the proportions on shortlists from at least one third women to 50 per cent, thus ensuring choice and opportunity for all. But we are clear that this is only one step of many. This is not just a numbers game.

JUSTINE MCGUINNESS
Chair
Women Liberal Democrats
London SW11

disabilities and employers on a case-by-case basis, it is possible to find appropriate employment placement - over 3,000 in the last three years. In this way we have been able to overcome the reluctance of many employers to employ people with disabilities and have begun to end their exclusion from society.

We are hopeful that the Government's detailed proposals will not encourage employers to take people with disabilities on short-term employment or training contracts only. This is an issue that often faces our clients today and we will be working to ensure that with help of this initiative it becomes an issue of the past.

DAVID BURGESS
Chief Executive
Opportunities for People with Disabilities
London EC2

Exploitation by security firms

Sir: Nicholas Long is right to criticise the inadequacy of the role given to lay observers of courts (Letters, 1 July). For some time now the detention areas in courts have been run by private security firms. If the observers had been permitted to do a proper job they may well have criticised the way private security firms exploit their staff for profit. The security industry is notoriously exploitative. That is the only way it can be both competitive and profit-making.

After the suicide of Peter Austin it is to be hoped lay observers will no longer be put off with the excuse of "commercial confidentiality". As matters stand this can too easily be

used as a smokescreen at the higher levels of management both in the prison service and the private security industry to avoid their proper share of blame when things go wrong, as they are bound to do.

PETER RUSHWORTH
National Secretary
Prison Service Union
Pontefract, West Yorkshire

Sir: Your correspondent Nicholas Long has raised a valid point with regard to the toothlessness of the lay visitors when trying to correct deficiencies found during inspections of custody areas and prisoner transport.

I would also like to raise another worrying concern. When these services were privatised, or contracted out as the Home Office preferred to call it, my son was appointed as a prison custody officer with a company in southern England. He was contracted to work a 42-hour week, an overtime worked would be compensated for by time off in lieu. As things turned out my son and a large majority of his work colleagues ended up working anything up to 96 hours per week, a 72-hour week was considered a luxury.

When the work force asked for their time off in lieu they were told that there were not enough staff available to facilitate this. Some staff accrued weeks of "time to be taken". My son, wishing to have a family life, reluctantly resigned from his job, a job which he found both fulfilling and rewarding.

My point is this. It is hardly surprising that dreadful errors like

the tragic case of Peter Austin occur when the staff are utterly fatigued from overwork. It must also be remembered that these officers also have to drive the custody vans having worked these long hours, no tachograph system is used. It is only a matter of time before another life is lost because of the working practices of the privatised prison courier/custody services.

I would join Mr Long in asking the Home Secretary to conduct a review, not only of the lay visiting procedures, but also of the working practices of the private prison custody companies.

P W L GREEN
Chesham, Kent

CDs: not such a high price to pay

Sir: Such a blatant misconception as Tom Heighman's claim (Letters, 1 July) that the retail price of CD albums has more than doubled in the last ten years, cannot remain uncorrected.

In March 1987, High Street retailers like us were selling the Top 40 CD albums for £9.99. Today, ten years later, we charge between £11.99 and £13.99, which represents a 20 per cent to 40 per cent increase - hardly the 100 per cent which Mr Heighman claims.

Where on earth is he buying his CDs?

ADRIAN RONDEAU
Proprietor
Adrian's Records
Wickford, Essex

Exhumation for aboriginal head

Sir: Next week will see the anniversary of the murder of Yagan. One of the best-known of Australian aboriginal leaders, he was shot on 11 July 1833 by a white youth. His head, cut off and smoked, landed up in the Liverpool Museum and remained there until, in 1964, the then Keeper of Ethnology - for reasons never explained - had it buried with other unwanted relics in an unmarked grave in Everton cemetery.

Now, as you have reported, his descendant Ken Colbung, his descendant Ken Colbung in Britain and seeking the head's return. His request for exhumation has been backed by the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, who on 29 June - after a visit to London in which the problem of Yagan's head was one of the matters discussed - offered to pay for the costs of digging the head up.

On Monday (30 June), the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islands Commission (ATSIC), representing Aboriginal communities, and the Nyongah people of Western Australia officially and unanimously authorised Ken Colbung to renew the application.

The previous Home Secretary refused a licence on the grounds that there were objections from the parents of several stillborns who lie in a higher layer of the same grave. But the Home Office have now been sent a technical study showing

that the head can be extracted without disturbing the stillborns, by sinking a shaft adjacent to the grave.

We therefore urge the new Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to give his permission now for a joint exhumation, in time for a joint Australian-British commemoration of Yagan's death on 11 July. European beliefs about physical resurrection are so muddled that we no longer know what they are - or were. But today's Aborigines are more certain than we are that the whole body should receive appropriate funerary treatment before the spirit of a dead person can rest in peace.

KEN COLBUNG MBE
PETER UCKO
Director
The Institute of Archaeology
University College London
London WC1

The Dome: it's crystal clear

Sir: Your report on the spiralling costs of the public bill for the Millennium Dome (30 June) brings to mind Ruskin's remarks about Crystal Palace:

The quality of bodily industry which the Crystal Palace expresses, is very great. So far it is good. The quantity of thought it expresses is, I suppose, a single and admirable thought... that it might be possible to build a greenhouse larger than ever greenhouse was built before. This thought and some very ordinary algebra are as much as all that glass can represent of human intellect.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose! Mandelson take note.

ROGER HEWELL
Bath

Form-filling Wimbledon

Sir: Richard Walker (Letters, 3 July) advocates "first-come, first-served, cheap entry, tennis for the masses" - but only those "masses" living within easy reach of Wimbledon.

Those of us who live further away would prefer more tickets to be available via the equally fair ballot - one only has to remember to write in October for the necessary form. Perhaps fewer corporate hospitality tickets at higher prices would achieve both aims.

MAIR GAUNT
Cardiff

essay

For sale on the Fourth of July

In 1776 the US was born, dedicated to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. By 1997, this has come to mean 'deregulation', but, says Mary Dejevsky, Europeans should be wary of following them down this particular path

Say what you like about the free market, but it delivers: cheap housing, cheap food, cheap cars, cheap utilities, cheap services. Strip off the layers of state regulation, and all that liberated competition just beats down those prices for the benefit of you, me and everyone else. That is the picture of the United States, as consumer paradise, that American boasts are made of.

So successful is the US, according to conventional economic indicators, that its brand of deregulation took Britain by storm more than a decade ago (with a little help from Margaret Thatcher) and - if Brussels gets its way - is set to triumph across the rest of Europe.

Was it not in the cause of deregulation that the hapless Alain Juppé took on the French lorry drivers and the pilots of Air France? Was this not why Helmut Kohl risked the wrath of German steelworkers, and why both found themselves having to placate unhappy telecom workers? Is the US not the shape of Europe's future?

Well, after three months as a "consumer" in the land of deregulated abundance - and one of the most dis-hard opponents of old-model Communism you could expect to meet - my faith in American-style *laissez-faire* is being sorely tested. It is not that the United States economy is not booming - it is: nor that many consumer prices are not lower than they are in most European countries - they are.

It is rather that there are significant areas of activity where, despite ruthless competition, there is no benefit to consumers whatsoever. On the contrary, we

are at the mercy of highly secretive and defensive businesses in which information is a deadly commercial weapon.

Consider the following. For my first weeks in Washington, I needed a hotel while looking for a flat and I set off to examine the options. At the first hotel, no one seemed to understand my question, let alone be ready to give an answer. For all the help given, I might have been soliciting the Lubyanka for one of the KGB's precious pieces of intelligence. In a way, I was.

What I wanted was a commercial secret - the price of a room. Not immediately for an emergency booking, you understand, but to compare it with prices and facilities elsewhere. On European innocence! This is something the system is specifically designed to keep from all but the *cognoscenti*.

In almost every marble-clad reception area, someone smart-suited had to be fetched from an office far away - the "marketing manager". The counter staff had no access to such sensitive information; they might, at a stretch, know what a room would cost for that very night, but they were rarely trusted with more. Price depends on demand, real and anticipated. It varies not just from day to day, but from hour to hour, depending on when a magic bar is reached that triggers a rise. There is no "standard" price for the ordinary consumer without the clout of a group, nor the possibility of negotiation.

The system has some perverse results. At one hotel, the price for one week was actually more than the price of one day times seven. "That can't be right," said the "marketing manager" when I

queried it, but it was - because the end of the week was going to be busy, so the prices had been jacked up.

Now pricing according to demand is an unimpeachable principle of the free market. But the drawback here is that you and I are not privy to the information we need to make a free choice. This is effectively classified, held in the deep recesses of the company computers. We have no opportunity to compare, nor even to judge the approximate price bracket we are in.

These practices, it is true, are the preserve of big-city chains. Smaller, privately run operations outside prime areas retain their charm and accessibility. But they are not in the big money stakes and it may be only a matter of time before many of them, like the few privately run high-street stores, are swallowed up by the big boys.

Something similar applies to hire cars. You can call around as many offices as you like; you may chance upon someone with a special offer, or you will not. Each operates the "bar" system, with rates that change from hour to hour according to market conditions.

The rate you were quoted at 9am for two days hence may be different from the one you are quoted at 11am when you have called three or four others to compare. As with hotel prices, you the consumer are excluded from a tightly closed commercial loop.

Which brings us to the iniquitous price of air travel in this consumer

heaven. Do you remember when deregulation of the American skies was going to lead to low fares and higher quality in most destinations across the US - and the world. Well, it did - for a while, and optimists think that it may do again.

For the moment, though, it will cost you three times more to travel two-thirds of the way across the US (Washington to Albuquerque, New Mexico, or El Paso, Texas) than to travel from Washington or New York to London. Absurd though it seems, travelling from Washington to Boston via London may be a money-saver.

If you really have to use a domestic route, the only way to reduce the price is to book several weeks in advance, and not change your mind or requirements. A Saturday-night stay may bring the price down a little, but not significantly. We are again in the land of the magic computerised bar, where prices are adjusted to the market - except that no one sells off last-minute seats cheaply. Less than one week before the flight, it is full price or nothing on most routes.

Two factors have brought US air travellers to this pretty pass. The ValuJet crash in the Florida Everglades made cheap flights by new no-frills companies suspect and boosted the more established companies. (The crash of TWA 800 off Long Island a year ago did not have the reverse effect.)

The other was a bout of route-consolidation among the bigger companies which has left many major routes with no competition. Where there is

competition, prices may be 50 per cent less than on routes where there is none. But the number of those routes is still in decline.

Deregulation or no, affordable air travel is no longer a feature of American life. In Europe, where airline deregulation is gathering pace, the trend is the other way - but for how long?

A fair objection would be that hotels, cars and planes are the concerns of a minority, even in America's highly mobile society. Competition (and market size) have brought cars for the masses, competition (and vast space) have permitted cheap housing, compared with Europe. But consider the humble telephones. Even the most bargain-hungry of America's compulsive telephone-talkers are starting to grouse. The "downside" of telecom deregulation - leading to middle-class dinner tables what house prices or builders are to their British counterparts.

The complaints are legion: repeat calls, usually at dinner time, from companies wanting you to "switch" to them on the basis of a "special offer" for one or other service; clogged long-distance and toll-free lines because companies have expanded their number of customers without sufficient lines to cater for them; directory inquiry services sited thousands of miles from the locality whose numbers are being dispensed - leading to recurrent and improbable errors.

But the biggest complaints relate to the complex and confusing tariffs: it is

virtually (deliberately) impossible to compare like with like, or even to obtain accurate information. Imagine the maze of mobile phone rates in the UK applied to your home telephone line, and you will glimpse the problem.

My attempts to persuade companies to fax me their rates failed at the first hurdle. "We can't fax." But you are in the telecoms business. "Yes, but we can't do it from our computers." As with hotel chains, counter staff are not entrusted with this commercially sensitive information. You have to penetrate several layers further - and even they can't fax.

The awful prospect, however, is that the next stage of "deregulation" could make things even worse for consumers. The present telecoms chaos may leave gaping holes in customer service, but the cheapish tariffs for major trunk destinations are of some benefit. Now, a number of the companies that were privatised and divided are trying - like the airlines before them, and the privatised utility companies - to get back together.

Recent reports that the former monopoly and still largest US telephone company, AT&T, was planning to merge with SBC Communications to provide local and trunk phone services, for instance, aroused a mixed response: the tariff structure might become simpler and more open, but prices could rocket. My feelings on learning earlier this week that the deal was off were just as mixed. The two companies could not agree terms and were worried about regulatory approval. So the price war continues, but so does the chaos.

Since then, a US judge has prevented a merger between the two biggest US office supply companies, Staples and Office Depot, on competition grounds. But unconditional approval has been granted to the takeover by the giant aircraft company, Boeing, of the only other US aircraft manufacturer of any size, McDonnell Douglas - a merger which the European Commission is currently questioning on its own account.

Watching the consequences of deregulation in American-style as a "consumer", I find it hard not to conclude that, while the early effects of competition are highly beneficial (the service in the still highly regulated US banking sector is considerably more expensive, less efficient and less consumer-friendly than in Britain), the advantages can soon wear off.

The pressure on companies to keep prices low and turn a profit can reduce service and quality. Low-paid junior staff - the ones who face the customer first - can be ill-informed, sullen and reluctant. Bigger companies, moreover, will use their market position to minimise the effects of competition. They track other people's prices in secret so as to raise their own to the maximum that this (artificial) market will bear. They strive - through buyouts, mergers, or restricted information - to gain a near a monopoly position as possible.

It is not true that the interests of big companies and small consumers are equally served by competition. The instinct of America's big companies, no less than that of Europe's state monopolies, is to stifle it. The market may rule, but without rules to foster continual competition, it seems to degenerate, sooner or later, into a dog-eats-dog struggle for survival.

Some years ago, a journalist travelled to the post-revolutionary Soviet Union and reported, famously, that he had seen the future and it worked. I hope I have not seen the future here in the United States - because it does not always work, at least not for you and me. Until then, anyway, best wishes for a Happy Fourth of July.

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A considered reply to the rainfall tax

So, how will this new rainfall tax work? Well, every time it rains for a long time, somebody somewhere makes a lot of money out of it.

Obviously that's not fair. No. So the Government is going to tax the people who make a lot of money out of rainfall.

Right. That's the gist of it. Thank you very much. Is that the end of the interview?

Well, that seems to wrap it up, doesn't it? I don't think that's what they call an in-depth interview.

Oh, isn't it? No. Better ask some more probing questions. Right... Were were we?

You were saying: "So how will this new rainfall tax work?"

Oh, right. So, how will this new rainfall tax work exactly? That's interesting.

What's interesting? You added the word "exactly".

Did I? Yes. I suggested that you said, "How does this new

rainfall tax work?", and you said, "OK" and then you said, "How does this new rainfall tax work, exactly?"

Did I? Yes. Why did I do that?

Because interviewers these days have discovered that they sound more intelligent if they ask stupid questions in an intelligent-sounding way.

That's interesting. Can you give me another example?

Certainly. One of the interviewer's favourite questions to politicians who have programmes to implement is this: "Where are you going to get the money from?"

Ah. And to make it sound more intelligent they say: "Where are you going to get the money from, exactly?"

No. They say: "So, what areas are you going to target to find the additional resources in order to source the funding for this initiative?"

Blimey... What does that mean?

It means, "Where are you going to get the money from?"

I get you. So...



Miles Kington

So you ask me who this rainfall tax is going to affect. Right. So, who exactly is this new rainfall tax going to target?

Excellent... Well, there are some people in the world who make enormous amounts of money out of rainfall...

Good heavens! Are there really?

Oh, yes. Name some.

Rice farmers. Umbrella manufacturers. Hydro-

electric engineers. Water company tycoons. Deep-sea divers. Manufacturers of tumble dryers...

Manufacturers of tumble dryers?

Yes. Every time it rains, it means people can't hang their washing out to dry, so more people buy tumble dryers.

Right. So, who else makes money out of rain?

Hairdressers. Bookmakers. Ornamental pond salesmen. Make-up manufacturers. White-water raft companies. Raincoat makers...

Yes, yes. I get the point. Just a moment. Bookmakers? How do bookmakers make money out of rain?

Bookmakers make money out of everything. How do they make it out of rain?

Well, let's say two friends decided to have a bet on which of two raindrops got to the bottom of a window first...

They wouldn't go to a bookie to place their bet. True. All right, have you ever thought that every time an event on which lots of money is wagered is rained

off, the bookies keep it all? Is that true?

I think so. Fishermen. Farmers. Taxi drivers. Marquee hirers. Owners of village halls...

How do owners of village halls make money out of rain?

Have you never seen the sign "If Wet, In The Village Hall"?

Hmm. And taxi drivers? Every time it rains, pedestrians jump in the nearest taxi.

Right. So we have all these people who make a fortune out of rain, right?

And the Government is going to tax them?

Ha ha. How will it do it? How will it do what?

I'm sorry, I mean, how will this new tax be implemented exactly?

Well, every time it rains.

Miles Kington writes: I am sorry, I have just been informed that it is a windfall tax that is being introduced, not a rainfall tax. Please ignore this interview and tune in again on Monday.

صكزا من الادل

A clear response to the cash for questions MPs

It was worth the long wait. Let us be kind and put down to shock the desecrating silence which was Conservative Central Office's first reaction yesterday to Sir Gordon Downey's report. For it is a tribute to it that it retains the capacity to shock even after the millions of the words written and spoken about sleaze in the last parliament.

Neil Hamilton, still fatuously protesting his innocence of the "central charges" until the last (for those TV stations prepared to pay for interviewing him) is banded to rights. Sir Gordon, contrary to Hamilton's confident expectations, had no compunction about concluding that he did indeed take cash in brown envelopes from Mohamed Al Fayed for asking parliamentary questions.

At least two other MPs, besides the wretched Tim Smith, would almost certainly, we now know, have had to resign had a trick of Tory timing not prevented publication of the report before the election. How astonishingly lucky, therefore, for William Hague that, like Jonathan Aitken, neither Hamilton, Michael Gyles (who stood down) nor Sir Andrew Bownen nor, perhaps, Michael Brown survived the election.

The robustness of the Downey report – which wasn't universally expected – is a big step forward for those confident that a reformed Commons can regulate itself. It is hard to see how even a Standards and Privileges Committee as heavily dominated by the Tories as the present one is by Labour could have upheld appeals against verdicts as painstakingly supported by evidence as these. Sir Gordon's report is a cheering vindication of the faith put in the appointment of a parliamentary commissioner by Nolan. Optimists have been saying for some time that they belong to a culture which has already been transformed by Sir Gordon's appointment, and the tightening of the rules for commercial interests enacted in the last parliament. Any MP offered such an interest now knows that he acts at his own risk if he fails to pick up a telephone to check with Sir Gordon's office. Even the dry *passim* judgements of the report – "There is a general obligation on members to the effect, 'If in doubt, register'. Mr Hamilton seems to have adopted the opposite principle and, if in doubt, gave himself the benefit of it" – are a reminder of the nemesis that can overtake MPs if they take the risk. Sir Gordon has done his duty.

It may seem harsh, therefore, to say that the system still has some way to go before it can be said to be perfect. Not every MP will necessarily be as clear-cut, not every MP on the take as breathtakingly arrogant or careless about covering his tracks as Hamilton or Smith. This means, first, that when Lord Nolan's committee comes to review the system, probably in the next parliament, it should con-



Donald Macintyre
The robustness of Downey is a big step forward for those confident that a reformed Commons can regulate itself

sider further refinements to ensure that it is proof against the powers of manipulation by the governing party. Nolan himself recommended explicitly that the Parliamentary Commissioner should have the same powers to publish the report as the Auditor and Comptroller General – in other words that he was not bound by the wishes of the committee about when he chose to make his report public. This recommendation got lost in the inter-party negotiations on how to implement Nolan. And because it did it was impossible for Downey to publish before the election. Depriving the governing party of the power to influence timing would be a highly effective incentive for it to keep its own house in order.

Second, the Standards and Privileges Committee has the power to hear appeals against Sir Gordon's conclusions and to decide what sentence to recommend to the Commons. It is questionable whether it is right for such a quasi-judicial committee to have its members appointed by party whips, to reflect exactly the party composition of the Commons itself. As it happens, two Tory members of the Standards and Privileges Committee showed, albeit in the comparatively trivial case of David Willetts, their determination to make the system work with integrity and impartiality. They were Tony Newton, a man of great honour and with a capacity to resist political pressure from his own party, who chaired the committee, and Quentin Davies, a highly independent-minded spirit who gave

Willetts such a hard time in cross-examination. But supposing they hadn't been around, or that the Tories had had a much bigger, and more easily manipulable majority – the conclusions might be very different. Labour MPs naturally throw up their hands in horror at the idea that a large majority on their side would ever yield to such political pressure. And tough, awkward MPs like Dale Campbell Savours and Alan Williams never would of course. But there is an important sense in which self-regulation won't be fully tested until a sitting Labour MP has had to be dealt with.

But that's for another day. Downey illuminates the closing rotten years in which Tory MPs were on the take and got away with it. John Major can't escape some of the blame for appointing as ministers MPs like Aitken and Hamilton whom Thatcher, with much better judgement, had overlooked. Royston Webb, Mohamed Al Fayed's ex-lawyer, testified to Downey that the lobbyist Ian Greer told him of being besieged after the 1983 election by Tory MPs seeking consultancy fees like "taxi drivers... for hire". The Tories will say that Downey reflects an era which has ended. But if Hague really wants to draw a line under it, he needs to express his own horror and determination to prevent a repeat. He should start by expelling the miscreants from the Tory party.

Hollywood's fantasy about sex and the stars

by Suzanne Moore

There is coming out and coming out. Rupert Everett came out years ago as a homosexual. Now this charming man has come out as a former prostitute, or "rent boy", and Hollywood is nervous that this actor's "new-found bankability", a scene-stealing performance in the Julia Roberts vehicle *My Best Friend's Wedding*, will be short-lived. Why should this be? Are we really so astonished that someone who performs for a living should have performed sexual favours for money; that someone who makes a living partly through selling their sexuality should have sold some real sex? What has the casting couch been used for over the years – knitting?

Only a few weeks ago we were persuaded to believe that the door of the celluloid closet had creaked open slightly, with the sitcom star Ellen cavorting with Clinton. Whereas lesbian chic is a titillating idea for the mainstream press, "hardcore" gay prostitution is something else altogether. It is easier to pretend that the line between happy homosexuality, and a kind of gay lifestyle where it is not unknown for people to drift in and out of prostitution and not be stigmatised, is firmly drawn, just as we like to kid ourselves that the heterosexual men who go to prostitutes are not the men we know. When the contents of Heidi Fleiss's little black book were revealed to include the names of several Hollywood stars, no one was very dismayed. Paying for sex is manly; being paid for it is a sign of emasculation.

What, though, do we pay our stars for, if not to stimulate sexual fantasies? Of course, this is not all that cinema is about, but it sure as hell helps. Acting itself is not prostitution, though most great actors will have done things they are ashamed of and audiences are not all sleazy punters, though most of us will have paid for a quick thrill and felt cheapened by it. But they are parallel careers in that they both involve the mechanics of arousal, desire and the necessary deferral of gratification that keeps us coming back for more. One cannot, whisper it low in case Gordon Brown hears, remove the selling of sex from the selling of cinema, however many tax subsidies you give to the film industry.

Yet the dream factory itself cannot cope with the demands of its own market-place. Stars are supposed to be available both as fantasies and in real life. Thus the knowledge that a lead-



Idol moments: (clockwise from top right) James Stewart, Sylvester Stallone with Julianne Moore, Rupert Everett, Robert Mitchum, and Tom Cruise

The movie industry assumes one must be bonkable to be bankable. We don't want former rent boys as lust objects, now, do we?

ing man is gay is considered damaging, as the actor will no longer be credible in romantic roles. Whatever happened to the notion of acting? Or to the suspension of disbelief? The assumption that acting is about playing at being someone else? The persistent rumours about the sexuality of a Tom Cruise or a Richard Gere can only be kept in circulation because we know actors are not always what they seem. Indeed, that is their job. Jimmy Stewart was not what he seemed, as the obituaries this week have shown. As the gulf between the characters he played and his real life was political rather than sexual, no one seemed to mind very much. His appeal was as an "every-

man", as someone who wasn't even acting in the first place. "You were looking at a man, not an actor. You could see this man's soul," eulogised the director Frank Capra. Stewart himself was bewildered about what he was doing. "Sometimes I wonder if I am doing a James Stewart impersonation myself." This impersonation often involved playing liberal, easy-going pacifists. In reality Stewart backed Nixon, was a good friend of Reagan and was hawkish about the Vietnam war. Did this detract from his screen presence? Not one iota. Stewart shared with that other great actor, Robert Mitchum, who also died this week, an approach that meant

not letting the "acting show". Gilbert Adair's obituary of him brilliantly describes the "almost imperceptible virtuosity of American movie actors". Mitchum, who shrugged off his career as better than working, and saw himself as a hired hand rather than an artist, was judged to have been "incapable of self-reflection". What a relief that is in the days when actors struggle so often in interviews to conjure up the enormous difficulties of their chosen profession. Mitchum's foudle sexual presence, his ability to convey real evil in both *The Night of the Hunter* and *Cape Fear*, appear instinctual. When Robert De Niro played the same part in Scorsese's re-

make of *Cape Fear*, he became a method monster, tattooed up, snarling and seductive. This was perceptible virtuosity, but not half as scary as Mitchum's casually psychotic menace.

Nowadays so much screen acting is showy. It is acting about acting: acting that refers to other parts that the actors have played. Look at Pacino and De Niro in *Hon.* trying so hard that it hurts. If Stewart and Mitchum were, as has been claimed, the last of Hollywood's great leading men in that they could effortlessly embody "authenticity", today's actors have a harder time of it because they are left with merely impersonating the authentic.

The old stars have been replaced with blank boys such as Keanu Reeves and Brad Pitt, edgy over-actors (see above), out-and-out weirdos, Harvey Keitel and Christopher Walken, or complete non-starters – the Schwarzeneggers, Stallones and Van Dammes – who don't even pretend that they are acting in the first place. A good man, as opposed to a bad one, or a boy, is hard to find. Until then we have to make do with the decidedly grown-up Harrison Ford, or trying to fit small-screen stars such as George Clooney into big-screen roles and even bigger copdies.

The star system may accommodate slightly more flexible versions of masculinity: but after several years of *Hollywood Babylon* revelations, it is still paranoid about male sexuality. In this, as in so many other areas, it underestimates the intelligence of its audience and presumes that fantasy and fact are inseparable.

For stars such as Everett – and Everett is a star if the definition of a star means that when he is on screen you don't want to watch anyone else – the assumption remains that one must be bonkable in order to be bankable. We don't want former rent boys as lust objects, now, do we? Well, yes, as long as we pretend we don't know about it.

The separation of an actor's life from his work is subject to endless speculation and made more complicated by the culture of celebrity, which strives always to deny that such a gulf exists. Yet we must insist on it, otherwise the very notion of acting becomes meaningless. What you see is not always what you get, and that is in fact what you are paying for. Unless we realise this, we might as well throw in our lot with James Stewart, who, in his role in *Harvey*, once said: "I've wrestled with reality for 35 years, and I'm happy doctor. I finally won out over it."

The waning of Middle England

The loss of quaint rituals and cultural traditions threatens our national identity, argues Clive Aslet

Military ceremonial, feathered hats, a tearful governor, the Royal Yacht, torrential rain – the bandover of Hong Kong was the sort of show that could only have been put on by the British. "They seem to have been impressed by the precision," said my deputy, speaking of the 8,000 other journalists who were with him to witness it all. But what did Tony Blair make of it? I wondered, when I saw him, bright-eyed and schoolboyishly wind-blown, on television. A chap whose gorge rises at judges' wigs and the silver aspects of parliamentary tradition may well have felt there were too many eggs in the pudding.

Now that the Prime Minister is home, he will no doubt continue with his mission to modernise what he clearly regards as a stuffy old country, whose quaint rituals and traditions offend against the managerial style of New Labour (New Model Labour, as it is coming to be called, from the Cromwellian tendency of its leader). No government minister has been allowed to attend the Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Ascot or any of the other big events of this damp summer, at which tradition is celebrated with glee. We do not yet know what sort of nation Mr Blair wants us to become – though I fear that the ghost of Praise-God Barebones will hover over it. My worry is that the process of change will cause us to feel even more uncertain about who we are now.

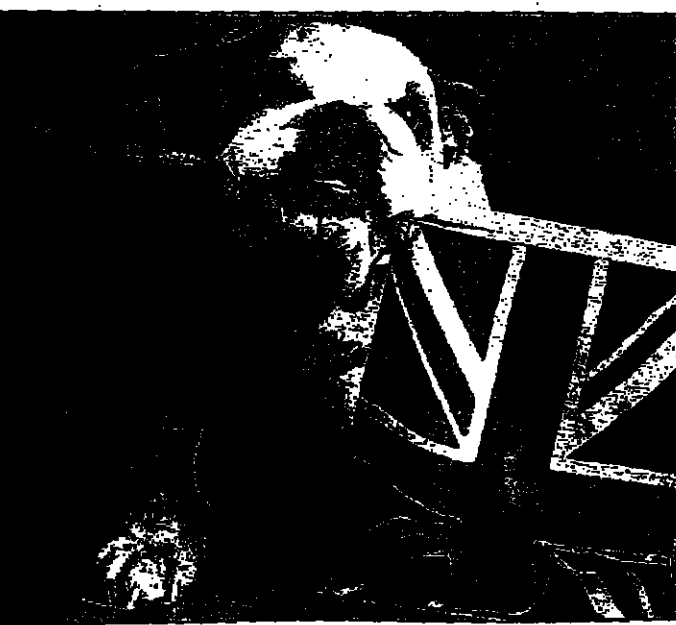
In the last few days I have been ploughing the soul of Middle England through the medium of local radio. Confined within a cubicle at Dysfunctional House, a charmingly dysfunctional set of headphones clamped to my ears, I have sought to excite the listeners of Radius Cornwall, Essex, Nottingham, Derby and others about my book *Anyone for England?*

The premise of it is that the common-held assumptions about being British with which I grew up will not be inherited by my two-year-old son. It is not just that the old shared val-

ues have been replaced by others, but that there are fewer shared values at all. My observations can only be personal; I imagined a lot of people would hate them. In the event, I found a gratifying but entirely unexpected number of listeners agreeing with me. People do seem to feel that their national identity is waning. Middle England believes it has become the hole in the Polo mint.

A desire for belonging is a fundamental human need. It is a need, however, that has been denied by the fragmentation that characterises modern life. Families do not cohere; people move home frequently; they are just as reluctant to join political parties as they are to attend church; once-monolithic corporations have downsized. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for all of Britain to be doing the same thing at the same time. Take the ritual known as watching the *Nine O'Clock News*. Once, the whole nation gathered around the domestic idol of the television set, to receive knowledge of the day's events from the BBC. Now the multiplicity of choice in TV channels reflects the car window tendency of everything that once looked immemorial to shatter.

And yet the urge to belong is as deeply felt as ever. At the personal level, it can be seen in the new fashion for family history. Up and down the country, local history libraries are thronged with amateur genealogists, tracing their roots. This passion used to be associated with recently formed nations such as the United States. The



British did not bother with it much, because, as the American conservationist David Lowenthal remembers having been told by British colleagues in the States: "We don't need those family details; we have a secure national identity." The frantic desire to recapture that old security explains the colourful outburst of Henmania at Wimbledon, when fans were as desperate to demonstrate their togetherness in adulation of their hero. The nation found a similar outlet through the VE and VJ Day commemorations. I would have high hopes of the Millennium Experience at Greenwich, were it not that the appointment of Cameron Mackintosh and Michael Grade seems guaranteed to create a spectacular for American tourists, rather than a celebration of our common past which could go some way to correcting the woefully inadequate teaching of history in English schools. By coming together at events such as

Greenwich the nation cements its culture. Do not reach for your revolver; I am not referring to artistic culture, but the general context in which we live. Once, this provided guidelines for the kind of behaviour with which the British were comfortable. They behaved politely towards one another, spit or belch in public. They did not beg. They were tolerant of one another's peculiarities, because they were confident in the ancient democratic processes by which a benign providence had caused their existence to be ordered. The loss of respect suffered by democratic institutions is probably the greatest change to have overcome Britain in my lifetime. Slence at Westminster – a card rather overplayed – is only part of it. Our public inquiries are the most laboriously democratic of any in the world, and yet Swampy and his cohorts set their outcome at naught. Not that it is just the Swampies, but with their opera-disrupting Summers, the prosperous neighbours of Garsington Manor are much the same.

We were, of course, terribly uptight. The title of the farce *No Sex Please. We're British* expressed an immediately recognisable attitude. Divest someone like me of his inhibitions, and there wouldn't be much left. It is possible for repression to go too far. It causes people to dash across cricket pitches and tennis courts without clothes, thinking they will shock spectators. On the other hand, there was an acceptance of a manner of behaviour that made people feel easy.

The writer is editor of *Country Life*.

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City fall-out looms from obscure Budget measure □ Sterling remains buoyant □ Utilities recover

Panic as investment banks face £1bn loss

Diane Coyle
and Andrew Yates

An obscure tax measure in the Budget could cost the City of London well over £1bn, experts warned yesterday.

The potential losses facing some individual investment banks could reach hundreds of millions of pounds, although the exact figures will not be known until full details of the measures are published with next week's Finance Bill. The full extent of the blow emerged as the FTSE 100 index leapt to a new record yesterday. It ended more than 80 points higher at 4,831.7.

BZW is one of the banks thought to be especially vulnerable to big losses from the Chancellor's unexpected decision to close a tax loophole.

A BZW spokesman said: "We do not believe the Budget

will have a material impact on Barclays or BZW's first-half earnings. However, based on our understanding of the situation, we do foresee some potential loss of future earnings.

"It is too early to evaluate the financial impact of the changes but the numbers being suggested, amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds, are unfounded and ridiculous."

BZW refused to comment on whether its losses were material or on rumours that it was poised to abandon its market-making altogether as a result of the hit from the Budget change.

"This would affect all the big banks. It could have a huge impact," said one leading analyst yesterday.

Other institutions said yesterday their losses as a result of the move would not be large, but the City was awash with ru-

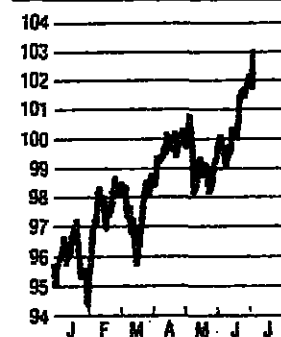
mours that one large market-maker was in serious financial trouble. The extent of the panic in the stock market was such that there were even unsubstantiated rumours of Bank of England involvement.

UBS denied it was one of the biggest victims. A spokesman said: "A final assessment cannot be made until we have seen the detailed provisions of the Finance Bill. But we do not expect it to have a material impact."

However, industry sources said UBS could still be very exposed. It is understood to be the biggest player in the market for the contracts backing guaranteed bonds issued by insurance companies, but most of the major banks are exposed to these.

"If the income from dividends falls by just 1 per cent it can have a devastating effect. Most of the contracts last for 10

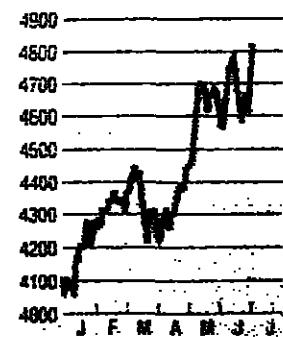
Sterling index



years, so a bank's income could fall by at least 10 per cent. That could cost them hundreds of millions of pounds if not more," said one source yesterday.

The guaranteed bonds alone could cost the banking sector as a whole more than £500m, according to the source.

FTSE 100 index



The contracts with a host of building societies and insurance companies to provide guaranteed income bonds for their customers mean the banks have to create an income stream by investing in complicated futures and options.

The reduction in dividend in-

come as a result of losing tax-exempt status will sharply cut the return the banks can expect to achieve. Many are exposed to potential losses on the derivatives trades.

Equities derivatives contracts are calculated on the old tax-free dividend basis. The income stream according to which they were originally priced has been sharply reduced by the end of the tax exemption.

The direct effect of the tax change will cost securities traders £500m over four years, the Inland Revenue estimated yesterday. It said the move was designed to clamp down on a tax incentive for big investment banks to opt for dividends rather than trading profits.

Even without taking into account the huge indirect effects, it could lead to some institutions withdrawing from market-mak-

ing. A Stock Exchange analysis last autumn showed the business was generally unprofitable.

John Whiting, a partner at Price Waterhouse, said: "This new move is flagged as blocking a loophole but the net effect is penal. Market-making is not very profitable, and this will make it even less so."

The Inland Revenue was contacted by several concerned banks yesterday, all seeking further clarification of the "tax leakage" measure.

The unexpected move, contained in a press notice issued after Gordon Brown's Budget on Wednesday, ends the tax exemption on dividends on shares held by dealers. From Budget day, dividends will be treated for tax purposes as part of their trading profits, and liable to tax. This will yield £500m directly by April 2001. However, indi-

rect losses due to the Budget could be much greater.

"This could cost the banks up to £1bn," Paul Wopshott, another partner with Price Waterhouse, one of the biggest accountancy firms in the UK, said yesterday.

Some traders will have contracts based on underlying dividend flows on shares they do not hold. Some analysts suggested this helped explain the surge in the stock market yesterday, as some banks rushed to buy the underlying shares, hedging this liability.

Anthony Rush, a senior manager at accountancy firm Coopers & Lybrand, said: "The measures introduced by the Chancellor fundamentally change the manner in which UK dividends in the hands of securities traders are treated."

Comment, page 29

Rate rise expected as pound soars further

Diane Coyle

The pound hit its highest levels for six and a half years yesterday in the aftermath of the Budget. Although Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, insisted yesterday that he had taken tough measures to reduce the pressure on interest rates and the pound, the Bank of England's monetary policy committee was widely expected to increase the cost of borrowing after its meeting next week.

The pound ended the day at DM2.95, its highest since the beginning of 1991, up from 101.7 before the Budget.

"The tax changes in the Budget will have a negligible impact on the economy. The Chancellor has handed the responsibility—and the blame—for managing the economy on to

Eddie George," said Adam Cole, UK economist at James Capel. Mr Brown said yesterday that he wanted a stable and competitive pound. "I wanted to mitigate the pressure on exporters," he said.

He said the Budget had set in place a framework for long-term stability which would boost investment. The new rules for government borrowing were extremely tough.

"When people look in detail at the figures they will recognise it as a significant fiscal tightening," Mr Brown said. He added that the reduction in mortgage interest tax relief and increase in stamp duty would stabilise the housing market.

However, many economists disagreed with this claim. David Miles, professor of economics at Imperial College, said: "There must be a lot of very relieved estate agents. If he was trying to put the brakes on the housing market, this won't do it."

Fresh evidence on the buoyancy of the service sector of the economy boosted the expectation that the Bank will take action very soon to prevent a full-blown consumer boom.

The newly established survey of services by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, showed that activity remained very strong last month, although it had slipped back from May's heights. Expectations for future business picked up in June.

The Confederation of British Industry's monthly survey of the high street showed a pick-up in activity in June. Apart from footwear and leather goods retailers, all sectors reported an increase in sales from a year earlier and said they expected a further improvement.

Alistair Isperton, chairman of the CBI's distributive trades panel, said: "At first glance, the Budget seems unlikely to upset these expectations."

Companies may go abroad to avoid double taxation hit

Sameena Ahmad

Some of the UK's biggest overseas earners were up in arms yesterday over the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plans to abolish foreign income dividends. SmithKline Beecham, BAT Industries, Glaxo Wellcome, RTZ and Reckitt and Colman were among those objecting to the Budget proposals which expose companies making substantial non-UK profits to a double taxation hit after April 1999.

Privately some even raised the possibility of moving their domicile outside the UK. Analysts estimated the move, which could cost UK companies more than £200m a year, would lead to a sharp increase in the number of companies choosing to pay their dividends as "Fids" before the 1999 deadline.

Hugh Colman, finance director of the SmithKline Beecham drug giant, which makes in excess

of 90 per cent of its earnings from outside the UK and pays half its total dividend as a Fid, said yesterday the move could force some companies to leave the UK. "It is a possibility. It is an alternative if this proposal goes through. It is one of those issues that SmithKline Beecham has considered," he said.

Mr Colman said he would lobby Labour to modify its plans. "We would have expected the Government to put a cap on Fids, so that companies which make, say, over 40 per cent overseas can still pay dividends in this way. I hope we will find some way to compromise on this issue."

Michael Frideaux, a spokesman for BAT, said: "This is completely inequitable. I can't believe that a supposedly pro-business government wants to penalise UK companies. We will be arguing our corner. There are a lot of companies affected."

RTZ, the world's biggest min-

ing group and based in London, was known to be deeply unhappy and Glaxo Wellcome said it was "disappointed" and would "make our views known". David Saltmarsh, company secretary at Reckitt and Colman, said: "We have until 1999. This is a double taxation on our overseas profits."

The upset about the abolition of Fids, which were introduced by Norman Lamont when he was Chancellor in the early 1990s, reflects their "use" as a way for companies to avoid paying unrecouped tax. Fids, which can only be paid by companies with significant non-UK earnings, allow companies to offset the Advance Corporation Tax (ACT) they pay on dividends against their mainstream UK tax bill. For companies which make relatively low profits in the UK and so have a small mainstream tax bill, accumulated ACT hits earnings.

Fids do not incur ACT and so

Companies most affected by abolition of Foreign Income Dividends

Company	RD as % of gross dividend	Proportion of earnings made overseas %
Alfred Domett	57	48
BAT	60	81
BTR	100	83
Burmah Castrol	33	92
Coats Vytella	42	83
Delta	72	52
Fid	42	83
Glaxo Wellcome	25	92
Inchcape	60	89
Lasmo	100	71
Lorho	42	96
Reckitt & Colman	40	88
RTZ	70	92
Sedgwick	8	62
SmithKline Beecham	5	93
Taylor Woodrow	62	45

allow companies to top up their UK dividends without damaging their earnings growth. Abolishing Fids will force companies which want to maintain their level of dividend growth to pay more ACT or could lead to cut in dividends. The companies hardest hit will be those such as Lasmo, BTR and RTZ which use Fids extensively.

Paul Wopshott, tax expert at Price Waterhouse, said: "Gordon Brown's move brings the whole ACT problem back to square one. It will be criminal if any company that can do it does not now start paying fids."

Phil Collins, UK equity analyst at James Capel, said: "These companies will either now disappear from the UK altogether or will start paying fids so that investors will accept a lower level of UK dividends later."

Though most observers agreed that leaving the UK was the "nuclear option" and may not be a profitable cost, it is likely to be used as an argument to persuade chancellor Mr Brown to change his decision. According to Mr Saltmarsh: "If there is no other solution, if the government remains unreasonable, it may be the last resort."

Holiday is over for companies' pension schemes

Roger Trapp

Pension contribution holidays are set to be abandoned by many leading companies in response to the Chancellor's abolition of the tax credit on dividends.

With the corporate sector due to put up £9bn to £10bn over the next 10 years to cover the predicted shortfall, actuaries report that many finance directors are asking if they are going to have to restart or increase contributions earlier than they thought.

Though most FTSE 100 companies contacted by *The Inde-*

pendent yesterday said it was too early to say what they would do, analysts at BZW suggested before the Budget that among the companies likely to be hardest hit by the widely predicted changes would be British Steel, ICI, Rolls-Royce, British Telecom and British Aerospace. Martin Slack, senior partner of actuaries Lane Clark & Peacock, said yesterday that companies from all sectors were concerned and had started to contact the firm.

BT expects to have to top up its pension fund, while the Post Office suggested it might have

to increase the price of stamps to cover an increase in contributions. But drugs companies Zeneca and Glaxo Wellcome, oil company Shell Transport and Trading and supermarkets group Asda said their funds were adequately funded for the immediate future.

The Post Office, which could see £1bn knocked off the £1.2bn value of its two funds, would not rule out an increase in the price of postage stamps as a result of the ACT move. It is seeking a meeting with the Department of Trade and Industry about how it can meet the cost, which it will

find difficult despite recording record profits of £577m last year. British Telecom, which had a £800m surplus in 1995, is also expected to have to put further cash into its £200m pension fund.

The claims of shortfalls in pension funds brought a robust response from Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury. "It is not unexpected that the National Association of Pension Funds and others would pile in if any change at all were made in the system of taxation," he said.

Mr Darling claimed the div-

idend tax credit and cutting corporation tax would boost investment and profits and allow companies to make higher pension contributions while the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, said: "The pension funds have very big surpluses. Indeed many companies have got pension holidays at the moment."

The reduction in tax on profits from 33 to 31 per cent was an "attempt to sugar the pill" said one financial adviser, but its benefits were far outweighed by the 1.5 to 2 per cent addition to wage costs that companies seeking to maintain pension

funding would have to meet. Tax experts have also repeated suggestions that the move, which the Treasury says will raise more than £5bn a year, will reduce rather than increase investment by diverting funds.

Organisations with final-salary schemes will be legally obliged to increase contributions to meet existing and future liabilities. But a further move away from final-salary schemes to money-purchase plans is widely predicted.

Additional reporting by Sarah Gillinson and Topsy Patel.
Cost to individuals, page 12

Utility shares bounce back

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Utility company share prices soared on the stock market yesterday, despite the heavier-than-expected levy payments for water and gas businesses, as dealers welcomed the confirmation that the tax would be a "one-off".

Only Hyder saw its shares marked down after Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, landed the Welsh multi-utility with a bill of £282m, equivalent to a quarter of its market value. Directors of Hyder spent the day locked in a financial review.

"We want to come to a conclusion as soon as possible to stop speculation and rumour," said a spokeswoman. Analysis said it could raise the company's gearing levels to 70 per cent. Hyder shares fell 14.5p to 80p.

The biggest gainers included the power generators, with National Power shares surging 35.5p to 569.5p, an increase of more than 6 per cent. Bower-Gun's share price ended 41.5p higher at 771p. Even BG, the re-named British Gas pipeline business which will have to pay £513m to the Treasury, saw its share price rise 9p to 238p.

Angela Whelan, utilities analyst from Credit Lyonnais

Laing, said: "The key thing is not the scale of the tax, but the removal of uncertainty. It's now gone in a clean way and the Treasury won't be coming back."

Thames Water described its £230m charge as "containable". David Luffman, finance director, said: "The windfall tax is not materially harmful. The Government has made clear it's a one-off." Thames shares rose 26p to 766p.

But the precise tax bill for two companies, British Energy and the airports operator BAA, remained shrouded in confusion. BAA estimated its levy at £70m and £100m, though some City calculations put it much lower.

Russell Walls, the financial director, said BAA would have to wait for the publication of the Finance Bill on Monday to finalise its bill. The confusion stemmed from the different flotation share prices in 1987 for small investors and City institutions.

Though BAA was pleased it had a relatively small bill, Mr Walls criticised the Treasury formula: "It doesn't strike me as terribly logical. I suppose they had to find some way of raising the money they needed but the 23 per cent figure seems a somewhat arbitrary number."

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4831.70	+80.30	+1.7	4831.70	4058.80
FTSE 250	4475.20	+23.90	+0.5	4475.20	3719.30
FTSE 350	2320.80	+31.70	+1.4	2320.80	2017.80
FTSE SmallCap	2227.19	+0.33	+0.0	2227.19	2178.29
FTSE All-Share	2269.38	+28.94	+1.3	2269.38	1989.78
New York	7884.05	+88.67	+1.1	7796.51	5032.94
Tokyo	20721.41	-75.01	-0.4	20681.07	17303.85
Hong Kong	15056.74	-141.05	-0.9	15196.78	12055.17
Frankfurt	3887.39	+32.63	+0.8	3887.39	2848.77

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Instrument	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year
UK	6.75	7.50	7.00	7.25	7.00
US	5.50	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50
Japan	0.80	0.81	2.20	3.24	3.24
Germany	3.51	3.47	5.61	6.55	6.46

CURRENCIES					
Pair	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Pair	Yesterday
£/\$	1.6638	+3.35c	1.5590	£/DM	0.5939
£/¥	1.6815	+1.4c	1.5632	DM/£	0.5911
DM/£	2.9480	+5.51p	2.3777	DM/DM	1.7490
DM/DM	131.204	-12.385	172.379	DM/DM	113.555
DM/DM	108.9	+1.0	85.8	DM/DM	102.3

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business

£5bn Lockheed deal creates defence goliath

David Osborne
New York
and Chris Godsmark
London

The frenzy of consolidation that has gripped the United States defence industry since the close of the Cold War reached a new pitch yesterday as Lockheed Martin announced it was to buy Northrop Grumman for \$8.3bn (£5bn).

If it escapes the radar of the competition watchdogs in Washington, the deal will forge a global goliath with a workforce of almost a quarter of a million and annual sales in the region of \$37bn.

It also puts the fragmented European defence industry under further pressure to consolidate. British Aerospace, which has pioneered the drive to consolidate Europe's warring manufacturers into little more than a single player, said the deal was

a timely reminder of the need to move faster.

While experts saw considerable logic in the strategy of Lockheed Martin, there was also widespread shock. Northrop Grumman had stated repeatedly over recent months that it intended remaining independent.

By virtue of the few players that will be left, it will probably be the last of the mega-mergers in the US defence industry. Almost certainly, it was driven by proposed acquisition of McDonnell Douglas by Boeing. That deal, which is worth \$14bn, received US government approval only this week but remains under scrutiny by the European Commission.

Both Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman are themselves recent products of the extraordinary consolidation rush. The former was created by the merger of Lockheed and Mar-

tin Marietta in 1995, while the latter is the fruit of the 1994 marriage of Northrop Corp and Grumman Corp.

There has been a joke in defence circles for some time that soon there would be just three defence rivals in the US: "McBoeing", "LockMartin" and "RayHughes". The latter is a composition of Raytheon, which is itself in the process of ingesting the Hughes Electronics division of General Motors.

"Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman have been leaders in consolidating the aerospace industry, and we are now taking the next logical step in combining together to shape the future," said Lockheed's chairman, Norman Augustine. The deal is set to be closed by the end of the year.

By comparison, the progress towards consolidation among Europe's defence and aerospace companies has been

painfully slow. Despite the urgings of Sir Richard Evans, BAe's chief executive, national governments have been unable to agree terms towards the aim of using the Airbus consortium as the template for a wider defence rationalisation.

BAe has remained caught between its continued interest in bidding for GEC, which will next week outline its long-term strategy, and the bigger prize of cross-border mergers.

A BAe spokesman said yesterday: "This only serves to remind us in Europe that we really need to get on with things. We would all like to move faster, though US businesses have the advantage of all being in the same country with the same rules."

The Pentagon has been candid about encouraging the recent spate of mergers on the grounds that they would offer better pricing at a time when



On the defensive: The industry behind planes such as the F-14 Tomcat has had to regroup since the end of the Cold War

procurement programmes are on the decline. Both companies yesterday said they had had informal contacts with the Pentagon about the deal.

The likely reaction of competition officials is far less sure, however. This week, for instance, regulators definitively blocked a giant merger in the office supply sector between the

Staples and Office Depot stores. Among analysts welcoming yesterday's deal was Jon Kutler of

QuarterDeck Investment Partners. Pointing out that both Lockheed and Northrop had been consistently bidding for the same contracts recently, he said: "You would have thought if Lockheed wanted to do this deal it would have done it a few

years ago and taken a competitor out of the marketplace. This is an obvious fit."

Lockheed, based in Maryland, is best known for producing the F-16 fighter jet, the C-130 lift plane and the F-117 stealth fighter. Northrop, which is in California, builds the B-2 Stealth bomber and the F-18 fighter jet as well as some parts of the Bo-

eing 777, 757 and 767 jetliners. Lockheed Martin has had an especially good run recently, earning, for example, the contract to build the next generation of space shuttles.

In May, it strengthened its ties with Northrop by joining forces with it to bid for the contract to build the Joint Strike Fighter for the US Air Force.

IN BRIEF

Cigarette firms settle lawsuit for \$3bn

Four cigarette companies, including the UK's BAT Industries, have settled a lawsuit brought by the state of Mississippi for more than \$3bn (£1.8bn). The deal will guarantee that the state will still receive its share of last month's landmark \$368bn agreement with the industry even if the agreement fails to gain Federal approval. The companies will pay \$170m by 15 July and 1.7 per cent of last month's global deal. Further payments will start at \$88m next year, rising to \$136m from the sixth year. As well as BAT, Philip Morris, RJR Nabisco and Loews are covered by the settlement, which averts the need for a trial to recover the costs of treating smokers, which was due to begin next week. However, Florida said it would continue with a trial, due to begin on 4 August, to recover \$1bn of the alleged costs of the state Medicaid health insurance from the tobacco industry.

Heron to spend £80m on development

Heron International, headed by Gerald Ronson, has bought a central London site for a 115,000 square foot development project from Lloyds Bank. The cost of the development, including the land, will be £80m. In May Heron said it would spend £100m to develop another 190,000 square foot site in the City. "We are making good progress in meeting our objective of building one of Europe's leading property groups," said Mr Ronson, who has spent £500m in the past seven months on several leisure-based projects in Europe. Heron said the property at 40-66 Queen Victoria Street, close to the Bank of England, had planning consent to build an office structure with 12,000 square foot floors and underground parking. Construction of the project, which does not yet have a principal tenant, is expected to begin in early 1998 and completion is scheduled for 1999.

CRH acquisitions total Ir£48m

CRH, the Irish building materials group, announced Ir£48m of acquisitions and investments, offset by divestments of Ir£39m. Four deals in North America earlier this year, ranging from glass tempering in Toronto to an aggregates businesses in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, came to a total of Ir£22m. An Ir£13m investment programme has begun at Irish Cement, while acquisitions and investments in Holland and Belgium came to Ir£13m. Sales in the first six months of 1997 include surplus assets of the US Ticon business acquired last year, road surfacing operations in South-east England and half shares in a Dutch concrete additives operation and a German paving manufacturer.

ScottishPower sells Paperstream

ScottishPower has sold Paperstream, one of the non-core businesses owned by its subsidiary, Southern Water, to Hays, the business services group, for £11.8m. Paperstream, which provides invoicing and payment processing services, was originally part of Southern Water's billing department. In the year to March 1997, Paperstream made pre-tax profits of £1.2m on sales of £14.7m, up 48 per cent on the year before. Southern Water has so far raised more than £24m from its divestment programme.

One 2 One signs up 80,000 customers

One 2 One, the mobile phone company which is jointly owned by Cable & Wireless and US West, lured 80,000 net new customers between April and June, second only to Orange, which said at the beginning of the week it had attracted 86,000 new customers. Vodafone dropped back to last place in the growth stakes, adding just 53,000 net new customers. One 2 One's figures represent an increase of 167 per cent over the same period last year. The company said yesterday it had increased its share of the total UK market for mobile phones from 7.2 per cent in June last year to 9.5 per cent this year.

Management buys BWAT coach business

Barr & Wallace Arnold Trust sold its Wallace Arnold coach tour travel business to its management for a sum "in excess of £40m". The company had been in talks to sell the division to Shearings, the former coaches division of Rank, but in May it threw the bid open and invited other offers. Staff had protested about the possible sale to Shearings, and took out a full-page advertisement in the *Yorkshire Post* saying that shareholders would not be getting value for money if BWAT talked to only one bidder. The £40m BWAT has accepted from management, which had the backing of 31, is believed to be more than the price offered by Shearings.

Borthwicks in takeover talks

Borthwicks, the company which manufactures food and drink flavours, announced yesterday it was in talks with a number of parties. Borthwicks said the discussions may or may not lead to a bid being made for the company. At the AGM, Peter Brackenridge, chairman, said trading during the first quarter had been satisfactory and was comfortably ahead of the same quarter last year.

Abolition of stamp duty

Our report yesterday on the abolition of stamp duty said that the increase to 1.5 per cent on property purchases over £250,000 and 2 per cent above £500,000 would not apply to contracts exchanged before 8 July, when the new measures are expected to become law. In fact, the cut-off date for exchange of contracts was on Budget day, 2 July. Completions taking place after that date will avoid the new increases only if contracts were exchanged before the Budget announcement.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Bank For The Border (F)	24.7m (19.0m)	1.77m (1.11m)	4.73p (3.21p)	1.8p (1.65p)
Lombard Joseph (F)	- (-)	1.84m (2.47m)	24.47p (28.55p)	20p (-)
Prism Rail (I)	189.2m (+)	-5.45m (-)	-37.7p (-)	nil (-)
Standard Sakers (F)	95.0m (55.1m)	0.72m (-0.73m)	0.92p (-1.6p)	0.75p (0.75p)
Universal Salvage (F)	67.1m (46.0m)	3.42m (3.96m)	8.35p (11.05p)	5.2p (5.07p)

(F) - Full (I) - 14 months

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BARCLAYS

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Data Bank

Share spotlight

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26

Property sector a Budget winner

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

The property and building sectors were moving in different directions yesterday as investors reacted to Wednesday's Budget. The general view was that the changes announced by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, were almost unalloyed good news for property companies, but less good for construction and building materials shares. So while Land Securities, one of the UK's biggest property groups, basked as its shares rocketed up 53p to 924.5p, RMC, a big aggregates producer, was in the doldrums, dropping 37p to 934p.

As the share price charts show, part of yesterday's reaction merely reflected what analysts' worst fears were not realised. Wild rumours have been running around the property sector since the beginning of June that stamp duty was about to rise from 1 per cent to as much as 6 per cent. As it happened, the graduated 1.5 and 2.0 per cent bands announced will raise property transaction costs from 2.75 per cent to a maximum 3.75 per cent.

More importantly, the decision to abolish institutional tax credits is being seen by analysts as likely to redirect large amounts of City money into the property sector. Even before the Budget, survey evidence suggested more than £3bn of institutional funds were seeking a home in the property market. The argument now runs that, with the yield on the FT All Share index in effect dropping from 3.5 to 2.9 per cent, the average initial yield of 7.8 per cent on direct property investment looks even more attractive.

Of course, property companies' dividends will be caught up in the ACT backdraft, but if institutional cash starts flowing into the sector, property values will inevitably rise. Companies with quality assets in London and the South-East, such as British Land and Brixton Estates, should do well as a result, although observers underline the need for selection. Those who want a more direct stake in the commercial property market should look at unit-linked pooled investment funds, although liquidity can be a problem.

Fears of a "gravel tax" hit aggregates producers such as RMC, Redland and Iarnac, but until the details of any Government move are known, the share price falls are just shots in the dark.

Elsewhere, observers poured scorn on the Chancellor's rhetoric about the threat from an overheating housing market, suggesting the stamp duty changes and the cut in mortgage interest relief from 15 to 10 per cent next year will do little to dampen demand. Kevin Cammack of Merrill Lynch

RM cashes in on IT revolution

RM, the UK's leading supplier of computer systems to schools and colleges, should be a big beneficiary from yesterday's Budget. Gordon Brown's pledge to add £1bn to the funding of schools for a year from April 1998 and another £1.3bn from the windfall tax over the next five years to tackle repairs and bring IT up to date will mean more available cash for information technology. Of the £2.1bn that British schools currently have to spend each year, less than 1 per cent - £200m - goes on IT.

RM has muscled in on the obvious areas of growth, supplying half the UK's secondary schools and two-fifths of its

primary schools with computers and popular educational software. One of its best products is SuccessMaker. A government study showed that using it for just 15 minutes a day for six months improved children's maths skills three-fold. What's more, RM continues to grab share from its only big rival, Exemplar, a joint venture between Apple and Acorn.

One reason is the weakness of Exemplar's package. The group still uses non-standard proprietary software, while RM offers the more universal Microsoft system, compatible with educational publishers like Dorling Kindersley, and sells directly to schools, offering good back-up support.

RM's Internet service offers even greater potential. The group supplies more than half of the UK's secondary schools with dial-up Internet services and a lucrative network connection which allows a whole classroom to use the Internet simultaneously. For use of the system, schools pay around £3,000 a year. Mike Greig, finance director, reckons that RM has more than two-thirds of the schools' Internet market.

Currently hefty telephone charges

are keeping the lid on growth, but an agreement between BT and the cable groups on a cap of around £600 a year looks imminent.

Floated at 175p in 1994, Budget euphoria lifted RM's shares 55p to 822.5p yesterday, putting them on a forward multiple of 30 times. Obviously not cheap, but given the prospects they could still go higher.

Prism on track for profits

Prism Rail is one of a clutch of companies sold off by the government as part of the privatisation of British Rail. The shares steamed ahead after it floated on the Alternative Investment Market last year as rail fever spread among investors. The logic ran that the rail companies, like Railtrack, were priced for a quick sale.

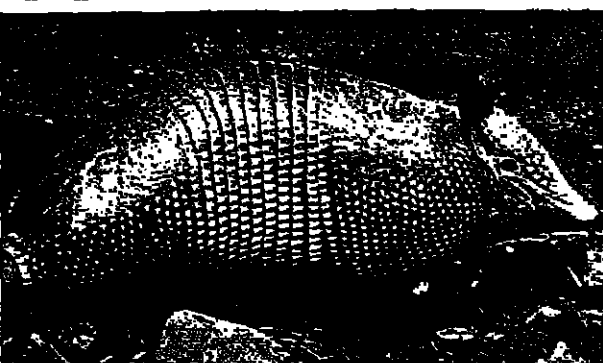
But there has been a growing suspicion that some of the companies are not the bargains they first appeared. In the clamour to win more franchises, some bidders may have pitched their demand for government subsidies too low, which could plunge them into the red. Prism has looked particularly at risk and its shares have nearly halved since peaking at 58p in January.

While there is no doubt that Prism's share price got ahead of itself, its slump looks harsh. So far its franchisees are doing well. Passenger revenues grew 7.5 per cent last year and are now running up 9 per cent. Innovations such as combined rail and bus links, new rail cards and extra commuter services have proved a hit. And Prism is still brimming with new ideas: station lighting and security cameras are next on its list of improvements. It has also struck a good deal leasing 44 new trains and it now plans a £15m refit of old stock, which should help passenger growth.

Prism made a profit of £6.9m in the 14 months to March, before a £12.4m charge to cover inevitable redundancy costs. Of course, so far it has done the easy bit, improving services which had been sadly neglected for years. It could find it harder going if the economy falters, which invariably means a tail off in rail passenger numbers. And profits will be lumpy as subsidies decline. Even so, the shares, up 20p at 30p, look good value on a forward price ratio of 6, assuming analysts' profit forecasts of £15m are realised this year.

An armadillo has taken control of the economy

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Spot the difference: is this Gordon Brown or an armadillo?

Gordon Brown's an armadillo - official. Accountancy firm BDO Stoy Hayward launched a Budget web site on the Internet this week to advise clients on the Budget's effects and included a questionnaire for owner-managed businesses.

The firm asked: "Considering the Budget's measures, has Chancellor Brown turned out to be (a) an 'iron' chancellor; (b) a 'marshmallow' chancellor; or (c) an 'armadillo' chancellor?"

The result of this test as of last night was 95 votes for armadillo, 55 for marshmallow and 45 for iron. So, the Chancellor's shaped like half a rugby ball and comes from South America. I knew it all along.

There's another Gordon Brown who hasn't had quite so good a week. Gordon Brown the co-owner of *Sunday Business*, the newspaper, whose company, Group 2000, has gone belly up.

His dump truck to printers company was advertised for sale by receivers from Coopers & Lybrand this week. What will this mean for *Sunday Business*, which Mr Brown co-owns with thirty-something entrepreneur Luke Johnson? Watch this space.

Christopher Haskins, chairman of Northern Foods, has been appointed by Dr David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to chair the Government's taskforce on better regulation.

The taskforce is an independent panel set up "to advise the Government on action which improves the effectiveness and credibility of government regulation by ensuring that it is necessary, fair and affordable, and simple to understand and administer, taking account of the needs of small business and ordinary people".

Well, if it can do that, Mr Haskins will deserve a hered-

itary peerage at the very least.

Mr Haskins, 60, has worked for Northern Foods since 1962. He's a member of the Round Table on Sustainable Development, the CBI Presidents Council and the Hampden Committee on Corporate Governance, so he's definitely one of the "great and the good". He'll need all his experience for his new job, however.

You might not think of the law as a "fast-moving good" but City law firm Nicholson Graham & Jones thinks otherwise. The firm has just chosen drinks specialist Andy Nash to advise it on strategic business issues and he says he is looking forward to bringing "a totally fresh approach and some hard-hitting ideas from the world of fast-moving goods".

Mr Nash is an ex-managing director at Taunton Cider and became managing director at Matthew Clark Taunton when the latter bought the former.

It will be fascinating to see how a Square Mile law firm compares to a cider maker. The firm recently advised Mohamed Al Fayed on the acquisition of Fulham Football Club, and Wandsworth Borough Council on the redevelopment of Battersea Power Station as a giant

cinema complex. No doubt NGJ's senior partners will soon be scrumping for apples.

Here's another unlikely connection between business and booze: Rio Tinto's new logo is red because "rio tinto means wine-coloured river in Spanish and vino tinto is red wine," according to John Hughes, a spokesman for the company. "It seemed logical to select a rich, red wine colour for our logo," he writes in the latest company in-house magazine.

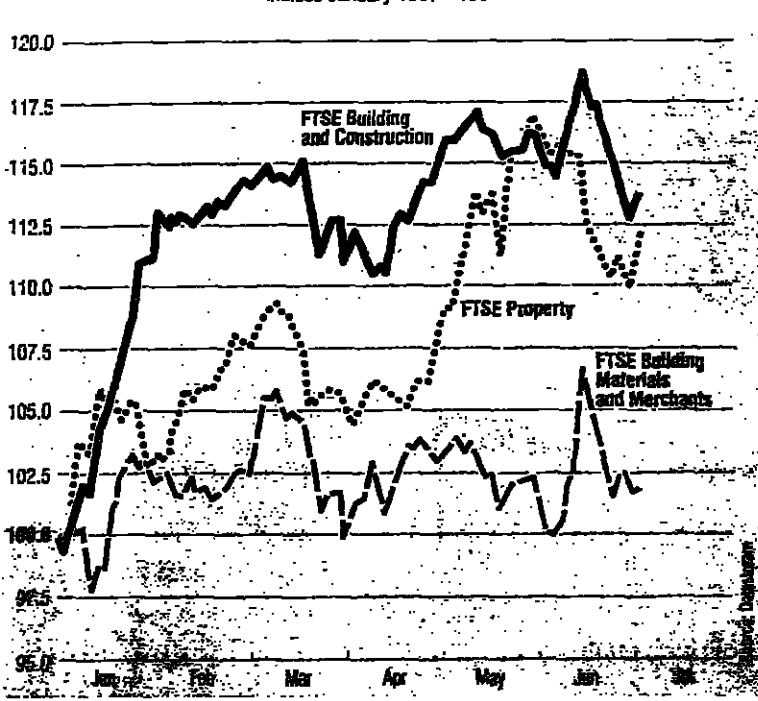
Bill Dacombe has seen a lot of water flow under the bridge since he took over Brown Shipley in 1991 in order to rescue the crisis-hit stockbroker. Last year he sold the company to Midlands broker Albert E. Sharp, and now he is succeeding Simon Sharp as chairman.

Mr Dacombe's career before 1991 was in banking. He says that when he joined Brown Shipley he found that "everyone was miserable because British monetary policy was being run to satisfy conditions for the ERM. It was only with White Wednesday in September 1992 that people started to make money instead of losing it all the time."

John Willcock

Property and construction: At a glance

indices January 1997=100



Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot
US	168.38	14.12	42.39	1000	105.78
Canada	23.60	69.28	22.79	133.75	32.31
Germany	2.540	54.58	231.63	100.00	39.38
France	33.285	266.27	325.78	58.95	16.13
Italy	26.274	26.27	26.27	107.19	359.348
Spain	161.20	30.57	255.29	173.56	45.60
Belgium	14.97	30.29	36.92	12.94	14.15
UK	60.780	69.45	520.50	30.037	76.74
Netherlands	75.428	75.43	320.16	14.55	34.53
Sweden	3.314	35.38	386.26	19.887	43.42
Denmark	10.00	31.32	107.53	16.32	37.16
Norway	26.726	26.73	95.283	14.74	5.4
Switzerland	13.075	249.239	767.58	72.259	33.88
Australia	2.470	18.13	300.16	14.65	16.13
New Zealand	2.238	9.3	30.20	12.559	3.1
Hong Kong	33.038	33.04	130.48	73.35	13.15
Malaysia	4.444	34.26	102.43	2.329	40.30
Singapore	2.484	2.4	1.14	1.725	7.9
South Africa	6.547	37.33	129.70	3.753	16.19
Japan	2.461	49.44	83.41	1.303	35.53

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	18833	0.9984	Nigeria	14334	85.000
Austria	23.721	0.9486	Philippines	44.329	36.400
Brazil	15.145	10.772	Poland	68.076	40.455
China	13.862	6.234	Portugal	20.033	36.445
India	17.406	1.4036	Romania	26.033	36.445
Finland	37.717	5.5079	Russia	6.257	36.445
Ghana	380.440	2.1400	South Africa	375.778	579.000
Greece	453.800	2.7450	Taiwan	26.033	36.445
Indonesia	60.221	38.7650	Thailand	46.971	27.900
Kuwait	0.500	0.3028	UK	6.884	36.730

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate.
Rate quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate.
"Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals."
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 120 3033.
Calls cost 50p per minute.

Interest Rates

UK	6.50%	Germany	2.50%	US	Prime	5.50%	Japan	0.50%
Base	6.50%	Discount	4.50%	Discount	3.00%	Discount	2.50%	
Interbank	3.00%	Lombard	4.75%	3-Month	5.50%	Central	3.00%	
Prime	4.50%	Prime	4.50%	10-Day Repo	5.25%	Switzerland	1.00%	
Discount	2.50%	Discount	2.50%	Repo (Avg)	4.00%	Switzerland	1.00%	
Advances	2.50%	Advances	2.50%					

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr
UK	7.0%	7.12%	7.25%	7.04%	6.88%	4.51%	3.75%	5.48%	
US	6.63%	6.17%	6.25%	6.28%	6.28%	6.41%	7.25%	6.28%	
Australia	10.0%	6.12%	2.50%	2.45%	2.45%	6.08%	6.75%	6.85%	
Germany	6.0%	4.82%	6.0%	5.59%	5.59%	6.36%	6.50%	6.50%	
France	4.75%	4.47%	5.50%	5.49%	5.49%	6.0%	4.93%	5.50%	

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%
Banking	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%
Local Authority	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%
Discount	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%
Repo	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%
ECU	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	7.1%

Tourist Rates

£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys
Australia	2.1800	France	3.5875	New Zealand	2.4040
Austria	20.0700	Germany	2.8515	Norway	11.8600
Belgium	58.2200	Italy	4.0100	Portugal	28.7000
Canada	2.2475	Hong Kong	12.6100	Spain	238.5000
Cyprus	0.8250	Japan	1.0725	Sweden	12.7400
Denmark	10.8000	Malaysia	27.5000	Switzerland	2.2600
Finland	3.8200	Thailand	188.1000	Turkey	237.5000
		UK	0.6250	USA	1.6300

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Gas	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75
Short Gas	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75
Long Oil	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75
Short Oil	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75
Long Euro	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75
Short Euro	59.97	114.75	114.75	114.75

Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	4700	4750	4800	4850	4900
Aug	148.02	113.69	113.69	113.69	113.69
Oct	176.75	147.17	117.115	92.142	...
Dec	212.94	189.110	182.134	128.161	...
Mar	242.108	222.122	181.150	154.177	110.181

Commodity Indices

Index	1970=100	1980=100	1990=100	2000=100	2010=100
Oil	100	100	100	100	100
Gold	100	100	100	100	100
Wheat	100	100	100	100	100
Copper	100	100	100	100	100

Industrial Metals

High/Low for day	Est/Conts traded	Open Interest
2: 27	13537	162923
4: 21	21822	272000
6: 60	52009	703001
8: 00	3143	n/a
10: 00	58632	138271
12: 00	111733	272000
14: 00	10040	268414
16: 00	32782	277233
18: 00	5367	117283
20: 00	8365	8365
22: 00	56	n/a
24: 00	9947	63026
26: 00	5911	44575
28: 00	55	9255
30: 00	50	6110
32: 00	24455	62781
34: 00	0	7108

Precious Metals

	Offer price		Cash/Post Total/vois
	4900	4850	
09	84/83	58/13	--
	117/115	92/142	--
10	182/134	128/161	--
22	181/150	154/177	110/161

WTI	8pm	Products ↑ Spot C/F NW Europe	(\$/tonna)
Aug	18.50	Prem Unleaded	172/174
Sep	19.55	Naphtha	174/175

Agricultural

GSCI Indices				
	31 Dec	%chg YTD	Year ago	%chg Yr
	215.28	-13.91	208.36	-10.20
	231.23	-4.17	280.52	-21.01
	85.86	-21.90	74.47	-9.96
	168.79	+9.59	163.17	+13.37
	191.03	-0.20	180.18	+0.25
	463.54	-8.25	483.43	-12.03

Other Softs

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Gill Income	65.34	66.44	6.2
(Accum Unint)	208.5	208.63	8.2
Gold	68.50	61.00	1.12
(Accum Unint)	70.20	74.20	1.12
High Income	39.80	39.97	04.66
(Accum Unint)	183.6	173.9	04.28

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Barron to get serious with Bluff

Racing
GREG WOOD

The Stewards' Cup at Goodwood and the Ayer Gold Cup a few weeks later are probably the most fiercely competitive sprint handicaps of the season, and it takes a horse of unusual ability to win both in the same year. Lochsong, who completed the double as a three-year-old in 1992, soon developed into the best sprinter of her generation, so there should be no need for pessimism when Coastal Bluff, winner of both events last season, makes his long-awaited seasonal debut in the July Cup at Newmarket next week.

David Barron, Coastal Bluff's trainer, might have opted to run instead in a Listed event at Sandown tomorrow, but when your stock in trade is handicappers, it is difficult to resist a Group One entry when the opportunity arises. Coastal Bluff roared down Barron's gallops yesterday morning and the trainer needed no further encouragement.

"He worked well and he will go to Newmarket," Barron said afterwards. "We are taking a hell of a big bite but he worked every bit as well as he ever did last year and Kevin Darley said he has done a lot of good physically since he last sat on him six weeks ago. The race at Sandown wasn't a gift at all, the prize money if he is placed in the July Cup is more than if he won at Sandown, and if he is going to get beaten he might as well be studied by good horses."

If the gelding is approaching peak fitness, however, there is little reason to think he will be beaten all that far. His cosy victory under 9st 10lb at Ayer last September was one of the most impressive performances in handicap all time, and his previous success at Goodwood was another, and as the season progresses, Coastal Bluff may well prove to be the most significant rival to Royal Applause in the major sprint.

Barry Hills's colt, already a winner at York and Royal Ascot this year, will probably start as favourite for the July Cup.

and is certainly Barron's idea of his most dangerous opponent. "This has come back really well this year," he said. "People say that there are no good sprinters around but you don't realise how good they are until they are gone."

When the weights for this year's Stewards' Cup were published on Monday, Coastal Bluff was at the head of the list, but his handicapping days are surely behind him and there will be few takers for the early price of 16-1 against him. Instead, punters yesterday launched a gamble on Danetime (at least, that is the bookies' story), who runs in the seemingly over-prescribed colours of Michael Tabor. Danetime was responsible

for the second and last major reverse of Tabor's otherwise impeccable season when, having been backed down to favouritism, he just failed to overhaul Selhurst Park Flyer in the Wokingham at Royal Ascot. Tabor, who is not exactly a 50p each-way man when it comes to betting, will be hoping to get his money back at Goodwood tomorrow, and Danetime is now an 8-1 chance from 12-1 with Coral.

The same firm sponsors the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown tomorrow, and while they have seen steady support for Pilsudski, the second-favourite, all week, Bosra Sham remains a solid market leader for the race. Those who wish to back her without having to accept odds-on are not alone, so since Coral have opened a book on whether she will win by more than two lengths, Henry Cecil's filly is 2-1 to beat her four rivals by up to that margin, while it is 11-4 that she will win by further. Given her performance in the Prince of Wales's Stakes at Royal Ascot, when she quickened right away to win by eight lengths, there may be plenty of takers for the latter offer this morning.

Bridgwater to sue owner over dismissal

David Bridgwater yesterday underlined his determination to make a fresh start as a freelance jump jockey despite taking legal action over his sacking by the owner Darren Mercer.

Bridgwater quit his job as Martin Pipe's stable jockey during last season, eventually linking up with Mercer, who had taken his horses away from the champion jumps trainer. But Mercer terminated the agreement on 30 May prompting Bridgwater, who is currently recovering from a broken left arm, to sue for a reported £28,500. A High Court writ has been issued.

"My agreement with Mr Mercer has been terminated and I will be riding freelance when I come back from injury," Bridgwater said. "I just want to get on with my career, the whole thing winds me up. I want to get back to riding horses."

Mercer, meanwhile, has indicated he would contest the action. "I am very, very surprised. No money are due to him and any proceedings which are issued against me will be vigorously defended," he said.

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SANDOWN

2.00 NOPELEA (nap) 3.40 Daunting Lady
2.35 Muthaba 4.40 Therese
3.10 Sofyan (nb) 4.40 Book At Bedtime

GOING: Good to soft. (Good to soft in places; straight course - Good to soft.)
STALLS: 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, 19-20, 21-22, 23-24, 25-26, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, 33-34, 35-36, 37-38, 39-40, 41-42, 43-44, 45-46, 47-48, 49-50, 51-52, 53-54, 55-56, 57-58, 59-60, 61-62, 63-64, 65-66, 67-68, 69-70, 71-72, 73-74, 75-76, 77-78, 79-80, 81-82, 83-84, 85-86, 87-88, 89-90, 91-92, 93-94, 95-96, 97-98, 99-100, 101-102, 103-104, 105-106, 107-108, 109-110, 111-112, 113-114, 115-116, 117-118, 119-120, 121-122, 123-124, 125-126, 127-128, 129-130, 131-132, 133-134, 135-136, 137-138, 139-140, 141-142, 143-144, 145-146, 147-148, 149-150, 151-152, 153-154, 155-156, 157-158, 159-160, 161-162, 163-164, 165-166, 167-168, 169-170, 171-172, 173-174, 175-176, 177-178, 179-180, 181-182, 183-184, 185-186, 187-188, 189-190, 191-192, 193-194, 195-196, 197-198, 199-200, 201-202, 203-204, 205-206, 207-208, 209-210, 211-212, 213-214, 215-216, 217-218, 219-220, 221-222, 223-224, 225-226, 227-228, 229-230, 231-232, 233-234, 235-236, 237-238, 239-240, 241-242, 243-244, 245-246, 247-248, 249-250, 251-252, 253-254, 255-256, 257-258, 259-260, 261-262, 263-264, 265-266, 267-268, 269-270, 271-272, 273-274, 275-276, 277-278, 279-280, 281-282, 283-284, 285-286, 287-288, 289-290, 291-292, 293-294, 295-296, 297-298, 299-300, 301-302, 303-304, 305-306, 307-308, 309-310, 311-312, 313-314, 315-316, 317-318, 319-320, 321-322, 323-324, 325-326, 327-328, 329-330, 331-332, 333-334, 335-336, 337-338, 339-340, 341-342, 343-344, 345-346, 347-348, 349-350, 351-352, 353-354, 355-356, 357-358, 359-360, 361-362, 363-364, 365-366, 367-368, 369-370, 371-372, 373-374, 375-376, 377-378, 379-380, 381-382, 383-384, 385-386, 387-388, 389-390, 391-392, 393-394, 395-396, 397-398, 399-400, 401-402, 403-404, 405-406, 407-408, 409-410, 411-412, 413-414, 415-416, 417-418, 419-420, 421-422, 423-424, 425-426, 427-428, 429-430, 431-432, 433-434, 435-436, 437-438, 439-440, 441-442, 443-444, 445-446, 447-448, 449-450, 451-452, 453-454, 455-456, 457-458, 459-460, 461-462, 463-464, 465-466, 467-468, 469-470, 471-472, 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2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, 2035-2036, 2037-2038, 2039-2040, 2041-2042,

Ballesteros needs Cup 'miracle'

ANDY FARRELL
reports from Druids Glen

Yesterday, in his first round since his back troubles forced him out of the Volvo PGA six weeks ago, Ballesteros shot a four-over 75 in the Irish Open, 10 shots behind the leader Westwood. The 24-year-old from Workson established a

Instead, there were further compliments for Westwood. Nick Faldo, who made a solid if unspectacular start with a 69, played a practice round prior to the US Open with Westwood



Learning from defeat was the key, Faldo said, although Westwood has nothing much to forgive himself in his near misses this

His start yesterday was breathtaking: a seven-iron to 12 feet at the 10th, a four-iron to four feet for an eagle at the 11th, an eight-iron to 15 feet at the

IRISH OPEN (Druis Glen, Co Wicklow) Early leading first-round scores (82 or tie) unless stated: 65 L Wagoner; 66 T Bjorn (Den), N Faldut; 67 S Richardson; R McFarlane; 68 R Allenby (Aus); C Monaghan; D Gifford; 69 C Rocca (It), M A Jimenez (Sp), K Vannia (Fin), R Chapman. Selected: 71 J Woosnam; S Torrance; 74 J M O'Connell (Ire); 75 B Lister (Ger); S Balkistors (Sot).

Regan's delight at final Test call-up

CHRIS HEWETT
reports from Johannesburg

"We were delighted with Mark's all-round play on Tuesday and we've always said we

Catt will renew an old acquaintance at Ellis Park in the shape of Jannie de Beer, the Free State stand-off and a fellow debutant at this level. The two played against each other during their schooldays in Port Elizabeth. "Jannie was and is a very talented footballer who

Tim Stimpson, the Lions' leading point-scorer with 111, wins a place on the Test bench for the first time, as do Allan Bateman and David Young, the two Welshmen, and it may well be part of the strategy to use three or more substitutes in the course of what promises to be another extreme encounter.

[illegible]

Backley's Bislett duel

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

A throw of 86 metres was sufficient for Backley to add a victory in Sheffield to the one he had achieved with a similar distance the previous week at

Christie's business partner. Colton Jackson, also has a point to prove in the 110m hurdle against two of the Americans who finished ahead of him in

Yobes Omdieki breaking the 27-minute barrier in 1993 and his fellow countryman William Sigei improving the mark to 26:52.53 the following year.

Leeds put unhappy Holroyd on the transfer list

DAVE HADFIELD

Leeds have put their goal-kicking half-back Graham Holroyd on the transfer list for £195,000 after he asked for a move. The 21-year-old kicked the winning penalty against Halifax on Wednesday, but has been unhappy at being used largely as a sub-

Leeds prop Barrie McDermott will be out for six months after breaking his leg and fracturing an ankle in last night's victory over Castleford at Head-

Wigan and the London Broncos are playing for second place in the Stones Super League Championship when they meet at The Stoop tonight. Both are 10 points behind the Bradford Bulls with a match in hand.

Although the London coach Tony Currie, is keeping quiet about some positional switches he has in mind, he will have his captain, Terry Matterson available. Matterson has withdrawn from the Scotland squad

John Duffy, the 17-year-old Warrington scrum-half who has just recovered from a broken leg, has been added to the Scottish squad.

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هكذا من الأصل

In the boxing world today, anything goes if it drums up a profit

An understandable reaction to Mike Tyson's outrageous behaviour is that it justifies the contempt many people have for professional boxing. Tragedy has imposed itself too often on boxing for last Saturday's squalid events at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas to be seen as terminally self-destructive. But even so, some who continue to find the rough old game in its purest form thrilling have to accept doubts about its long-term future.

Boxing has never subscribed to the rules of polite society and, as Tyson's image as a violent living-on-the-edge predator has always been a big part of his appeal, the career of boxing's cash machine - Tyson's purses for six contests since being

released from prison exceed \$140m (£86m) - may not be over. Although executives of the cable television network, Showtime, that has provided much of Tyson's wealth have unquestionably appalled by his despicable conduct they are sensitive to the possibility of a move by their chief rivals, Home Box Office. I am reliably informed that HBO want nothing to do with the former undisputed champion, and in any case responsibility for ensuring that Tyson is suitably punished rests with the Nevada Athletic Commission. Empowered by state law to fine Tyson 10 per cent of his \$30m purse they are obliged to impose at least an 18-month suspension. Anything less would be an insult to society and

in ignorance of widespread revolution. In the four days since Tyson was disqualified for biting Evander Holyfield's ears I have spoken to many people who watched the incidents on television or read about them in newspapers. All were disgusted, none convinced by the apology Tyson issued on Monday. They included a small group of boys at baseball batting practice in Albany. Asked if they thought that Tyson's remorse is genuine, one, a rough looking item, said, "Naw, he's just trying to get off those charges." A problem for the traditionalists is that television's pernicious influence has served to place boxing only a short step ahead of professional



KEN JONES

wrestling. Promoters argue that they must conform to modern preferences in style and presentation but this ignores the importance of boxing's traditional dignity. Last week, for example, before Holyfield and Tyson took turns to

speak at a press conference, we were subjected to a horrible slanging match between two women who appeared on the undercard. Apart from a personal objection to women in the ring this was typical of values that now prevail in boxing. Anything goes if it drums up a profit.

It was suggested this week that a sure-fire seller would be Tyson against the ancient George Foreman. "Bring that one in and you'd be sure of a pay-per-view record," somebody said. This says a great deal about human nature.

As for Tyson, he can no longer be regarded as one of the great heavyweights. Even before incarceration took away his once remarkable leg speed and manoeuvrability there was

not enough to suggest that he would have been even money with such notables as Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes, Foreman and Sonny Liston. And there is no longer any doubt that much of his success sprang from intimidation. It was significant last week that Tyson never once tried to catch Holyfield's attention during the preliminaries. Holyfield, meanwhile, was a picture of serenity, confident that he had Tyson's measure.

Not much credence can be given to the theory that Tyson took the coward's way out by getting himself disqualified. Paradoxically, the self-styled "baddest man on the planet" proved again that he cannot handle a rough contest and lost all

control when a head butt split his right eyelid.

Significantly, you may think, US television executives do not think this scandalous affair will have an adverse effect on boxing's hard-core popularity. Rob Correa, vice-president of programming for CBS sports, said: "I don't think it's a bonus or a distraction. I just think it's another way day in the world of boxing. A lot of people tuned in to see Tyson out of curiosity, but I don't think that's going to evolve into more or less viewers in the future. This sport is always on the verge of something chaotic."

Sport? As the referee, Mills Lane, said after last week's contest: a business that just happens to find its way on to the sports pages.

Jansen takes on Celtic challenge

Football
MARK BURTON

Wim Jansen was revealed yesterday as the man who has taken on the poisoned chalice of the Scottish game, taking over as Celtic's head coach on a three-year contract.

At least he will start the daunting task of producing a side to challenge Rangers' dominance in familiar surroundings. He will link up with his new charges today, one day into their three-match tour of his native Netherlands.

The appointment of 53-year-old Jansen brings to an end Celtic's search for a new figure-

head after the dismissal of manager Tommy Burns 10 weeks ago. Jansen, flanked by Celtic's managing director, Fergus McCann, and their general manager, Jock Brown, when his appointment was announced yesterday, has been out of football for six months after being in charge of the Japanese League side, San Frecce. He made his name as a coach at the Rotterdam club, Feyenoord.

Jansen acknowledged that he faces a big challenge, but it is one he relishes. "Celtic has always had a special place in my memories," he said. "They were involved in the greatest day of my career - the 1970 European Cup final against Feyenoord -

and I want to bring Celtic back to the highest level. I am delighted to be joining such a famous club."

Jansen won 65 caps and played alongside the Dutch legend, Johan Cruyff. Sheffield United, frustrated in their pursuit of Bruce Riech by Queen's Park Rangers' refusal to allow them to talk to their assistant manager, met Joe Royle for secret talks yesterday about becoming their new manager and completing a swap with Howard Kendall. The former Everton manager impressed United officials at an interview and maybe given the post in the next 48 hours.

Royle would link up again with his old Everton No 2 Willie Donachie if he asked to replace Kendall.

Chris Waddle is in talks with Burnley about becoming their new player-manager. The former England winger and his agent met the Second Division club last night and he could pip Wrexham's Brian Flynn for the job.

Fabrizio Ravanelli is facing disciplinary action from Middlesbrough after failing to report back for training at the Riverside Stadium yesterday. The Italian striker, who is expected to leave Tyneside before next season kicks off, has already said he will not play for Boro following their relegation from the Premiership.

His escape route could take him to Goodison Park. Everton's new manager, Howard Kendall, has told Bryan Robson to take his pick of players in exchange for Fabrizio Ravanelli. Kendall is willing to give Middlesbrough one, or even two, of his squad for the Italian striker.

Sasa Curcic, the Aston Villa midfielder, was another foreign import to fail to report back for pre-season training. The Yugoslav international will face the wrath of his manager, Brian Little, after being stranded in Spain with an expired visa.



University College Dublin (left) and Nottingham University avoid a ducking in the Temple Cup yesterday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Searle sets up stern test of his sculling

Rowing
HUGH MATHESON
reports from Henley

Today Searle will race Adri Midgall, the Dutchman who looked smooth and accomplished yesterday and could prove a stumbling block in what Searle described as "a winnable race".

In the other half of the draw, Peter Haining defied his early season form to scull through Nick Macdonald Crowley, the first "selected" sculler to be put out. Haining happy with his returning strength, embraced the loser on the finish line and

said: "Everyday it's a little better."

The women's sculling event, now known as the Princess Royal Challenge Cup, opened with wins for the two Olympians, Britain's Gail Batten and Maria Brandin from Sweden, who set the record here in 1995.

In the Princess Elizabeth Cup for schools when Westminster, winners of the second round event at the National Schools Regatta beat Radley, who won the top title there.

Westminster stole a quarter length off the start and had pulled out to half a length before Radley hauled them back to level at the Mile Post, but Westminster dug deeper to win by two-thirds of a length. St Pauls will be happy to have gone six seconds faster beating Abingdon by two lengths.

Rudergesellschaft Wiking, the Berlin lightweight entered in the Thames Cup for club eights, were ruled out after the Regatta's authorities were told

they had rowed with three overqualified oarsmen.

The Thames Cup excludes any who have raced in a World Championships or Olympics within the past four years. "By the time they got to me that had read the rules carefully, and were obviously dismayed," the Regatta chairman, Mike Sweeney, said.

Tideway Scullers School, coached by Richard Tinkler, "rowed over" to gain a third round race with Castle Semple, of Scotland.

Dismasted Briton in amazing race

Sailing

In a remarkable piece of ingenuity and sheer determination, British short-handed sailor Mark Turner, with crew Fred Leclerc, yesterday completed the Mini Fastnet 11th out of 29 starters despite being partially dismasted in high winds north of the Scillies on Tuesday, writes Stuart Alexander.

This means that he and his 6.5-metre Finot-designed Carphone Warehouse have qualified for the singlehanded Mini Transat which starts on 28 September in Brest. Turner even hopes to do a singlehanded race across the Bay of Biscay later this month.

Turner brought his yacht into the finish at Le Trebeurden, near Roscoff, Brittany, at lunchtime yesterday having rigged a reduced mainsail and jib to take advantage of surfing conditions all the way home. He also had to repair a serious leak in the stern after the backstay had been ripped out.

Pressure on Estoril to improve track

Motor racing

The Portuguese government, racing against time to regain a Formula One grand prix at Estoril this year, is pondering drastic action to meet the deadline for the track improvements there that have been demanded by the sport's ruling body.

The FIA gave a 31 August deadline for the completion of improvements at the country's only Formula One circuit, but negotiations between the government and the circuit's owners are deadlocked. Officials are considering requisitioning the venue so that work can be started, according to the daily newspaper *Publico*. The government may also choose to appropriate the circuit or build a new one, the report said.

Rubens Barrichello escaped unhurt from a 175mph crash during testing at Silverstone yesterday. Mike Hakkinen recorded the fastest time in a session which also saw Damon Hill crash into the pit wall.

Baseball

Atlanta Braves beat Chicago White Sox 7-1. Montreal Expos beat New York Mets 7-1. St. Louis Cardinals beat Cincinnati Reds 6-1. Pittsburgh Pirates beat San Francisco Giants 6-1. Cleveland Indians beat Toronto Blue Jays 6-1. Boston Red Sox beat New York Yankees 6-1. Los Angeles Dodgers beat San Diego Padres 6-1. Houston Astros beat Texas Rangers 6-1. Florida Marlins beat Miami Marlins 6-1. San Francisco Giants beat Pittsburgh Pirates 6-1. St. Louis Cardinals beat Cincinnati Reds 6-1. Pittsburgh Pirates beat San Francisco Giants 6-1. Cleveland Indians beat Toronto Blue Jays 6-1. Boston Red Sox beat New York Yankees 6-1. Los Angeles Dodgers beat San Diego Padres 6-1. Houston Astros beat Texas Rangers 6-1. Florida Marlins beat Miami Marlins 6-1. San Francisco Giants beat Pittsburgh Pirates 6-1. St. Louis Cardinals beat Cincinnati Reds 6-1. Pittsburgh Pirates beat San Francisco Giants 6-1. Cleveland Indians beat Toronto Blue Jays 6-1. Boston Red Sox beat New York Yankees 6-1. 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sport

WIMBLEDON 97



Martina Hingis shows the full face of the racket on the way to her victory in straight sets over Anna Kournikova yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Hingis pulls rank on Kournikova

GUY HODGSON

The problem with history is that you cannot guarantee where it is going to happen. Britain waited for the momentous to unfold on No 1 Court yesterday, only for Centre Court to provide. It was like setting up your deckchair on the wrong Spanish beach and missing the Battle of Trafalgar.

All England expected; 16-year-old Martina Hingis did her duty, becoming the youngest Wimbledon finalist this century. If she wins tomorrow only Lottie Dod, at 15 years 283 days in 1887, will have been a younger champion. The downside of Henman has meant she is not getting the acclaim she deserves.

Hingis beat Anna Kournikova 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 2min that was not as easy as the scoreline suggests. The Russian possibly deserved a set, but Hingis is not in the habit of letting those slip, as six unblemished matches at Wimbledon testify. "No one is going to ask what the score was," the No 1 seed said. "It's just a victory."

"It wasn't one of my best performances, but she really went for her shots. I was like, 'Oh God, another winner'." More importantly, the flat trajectory of Kournikova's fierce shots left little margin of error and it was a line she frequently crossed.

Nevertheless, Kournikova, also 16, has improved so much during the Championships that it has not required a fanciful imagination to foresee her ri-

valry with Hingis developing into the clash of the titans that was Navratilova versus Evert. Martina won that series and another Martina yesterday went 2-0 up in the current one.

Hingis, for one, saw the latest victory as an instalment in a saga rather than a definitive statement. "When we posed for the photographers after the toss I said 'This is not the first time and I'm sure there are going to be many more times'. Everyone is making a big rivalry of it. Until now I've beaten her at the great tournaments so she still has something to improve, but she's getting better and better."

The Russian girl is so new to this game that her career earnings are \$205,659 (£127,000), which would keep most teenagers in Spice Girls paraphernalia but

is laughably small in a sport where Hingis, just nine months older, has accumulated more than \$3m (£1.8m). Experience was bound to count sometime against her at Wimbledon, her second Grand Slam tournament, and that time was yesterday.

"I'm sure I'll learn something from this match," Kournikova said before looking at the positive. "I've had a great tournament, I'm really happy the way I played. It's unbelievable I got to the semi-finals. I was dreaming about this."

When she wakes up to reality it is safe to say an urgent drill on the training schedule at Nick Bollettieri's camp in Florida will be getting a serve to land in the box in such a way it does not crave to be walloped. Hingis hardly threatened Goran Ivani-

sevic's record of 46 aces in a match either but at least her opponent had to think a bit. The only problem when facing Kournikova yesterday was whether to go for the winner on the backhand or the forehand side.

The first six games went to the receiver so that when Hingis actually came on to her serve you felt a turning point had arrived. So, clearly, did Kournikova who suddenly began to grimace with an injury to her left hip.

What was really hurting her, however, was the innocuous nature of her opening shot. Kournikova has a wonderfully free forehand, about as exuberant a shot as you will see in tennis, but it amounts to little if she is chasing the point rather than dominating it.

Hingis sent her opponent from side to side, wearing her down with accuracy as much as power, so that if there are complaints about a trench at either end of the court you know who to blame. Kournikova returns like a boomerang she cannot retrieve indefinitely.

Kournikova did not win a serve until she was 3-1 down in the second set, by which time Hingis had her gaze fixed on the finishing line. The last three games were over in a flash.

For Hingis the chance is there to erase the memory of her losing the French Open final to Iva Majoli last month, her only defeat this year in 43 matches. "In Paris I was already tired when I stepped on to the court. I wasn't in great shape. This time I'm really looking forward to it."



Power play: Pete Sampras strikes a backhand during his four-set defeat of Boris Becker

GUY HODGSON

It was billed as the meeting of the triple champions and potentially the match of Wimbledon 1997. Instead it proved to be Boris Becker's valediction. Pete Sampras reached his fifth semi-final in six years; the German announced his retirement.

The champion of 1985, 1986 and 1989 and four-times runner-up revealed he would not be returning. "That's it for me," he said. "This is my last time at Wimbledon. I feel it's a good moment to go."

The score yesterday was 6-1, 6-7, 6-1, 6-4, but if you wanted

a true representation of the way the match went it would be best to ignore the second set. Becker pickpocketed that as surely as if he had slipped his hand into his opponent's tennis bag.

By the end he looked thoroughly demoralised, shrieking at his errors, hangdog in his demeanour. He was reminiscent of Jimmy Connors facing John McEnroe in the 1984 final in that everything he tried simply could not cope with the wizardry heading his way. Sampras, yesterday, was incandescent.

The tone was set from the beginning. Becker, once known as "Boom-Boom" because of his service, was broken in the first game and lost the set in 25 minutes. The statistic for first serves

in said everything, 70 per cent for Sampras, 27 for Becker. In the second, the German clung on, barely threatening Sampras but somehow resisting the waves of power and invention coming over from the other side of the net. Sampras would surely take the tie-break; incredibly he lost it 7-5.

Would Sampras, Wimbledon's champion for three successive years from 1993 to 1995, crack at this injustice? There was more chance of the All England Club painting advertising logos on their laws.

The American took the third set at a gallop and then broke Becker early in the third, winning in 2hr 2min. When Sampras serves, volleys and passes

like that he is virtually impossible to beat as Todd Woodbridge may find out today.

At the end of the two great champions met at the net, Becker stopping to chat to the irresistible force. He might have said "Good luck", but it would have been superfluous. Sampras is the only seed left in the men's singles and, in all probability, the only one with any hope of winning the championship on Sunday.

Becker, fast closing on his 30th birthday, walked with Sampras to the locker-room and then allowed the American to go ahead, pausing to make an exaggerated gesture of thanks to the Centre Court crowd. It was his final bow.

Broken Becker bids farewell

Court circular

Kournikova first of a long line

Anna Kournikova's 6-3, 6-2 semi-final defeat yesterday by Martina Hingis did little to dispel the conviction that Kournikova is not only on a path of personal glory but to blaze a trail for a generation of Russians coming on behind her.

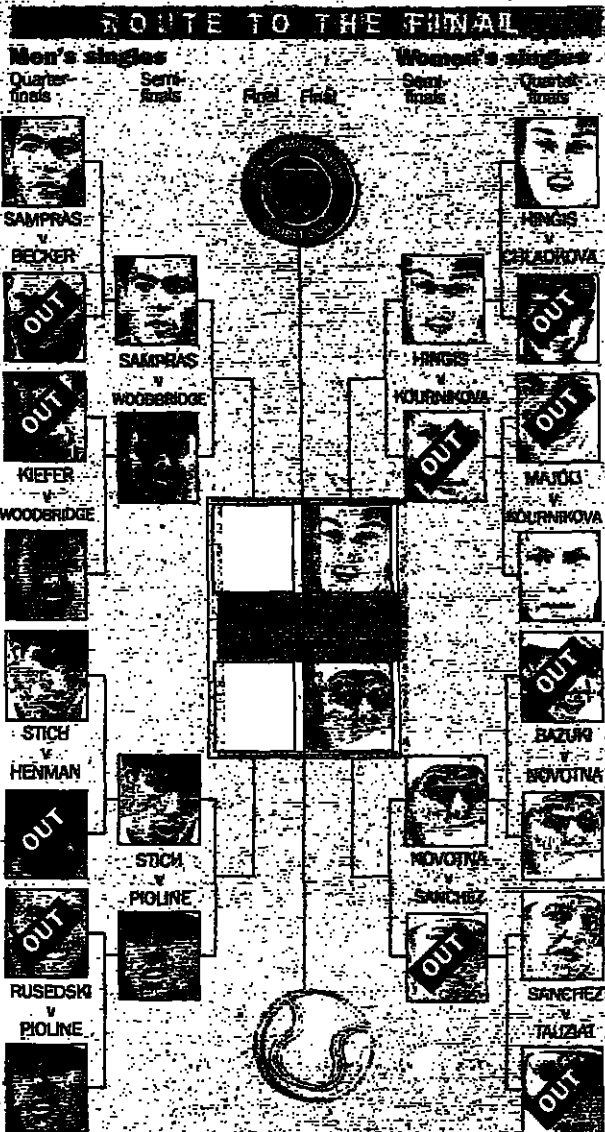
Down by the rubbish dump and old storehouses round the back of Moscow's sprawling Sokolniki park may seem an unlikely nursery for the world's most glamorous teenage tennis prodigy, but at the Spartak Olympic Sports School they claim the hard-hitting 16-year-old for their own and are aggrieved at media reports that she owes her success to coaching at the Nick Bollettieri academy in Florida over the last five years.

What is more, there are dozens more Russian youngsters whose name she came from Kournikova has attended the Spartak school, one of the former Soviet Union's full-time hot-houses for young sporting talent.

Since the age of six. Of its 18 mostly day courts, only one is indoors but, according to staff, Kournikova still trains there regularly. "All the credit's going to Bollettieri," director Natalya Kochetkova said. "But she spends most of her time here."

Spartak's Larisa Prokhorovskaya is still Kournikova's coach, travelling with her to tournaments, and another Spartak coach, Rosa Mukhammedzhanova, said: "We'll produce a lot more Kournikovas in future. We've dozens of very strong under-12s and under-14s. You're going to see a lot more Russians in international tournaments."

Staff at the school were quick to praise her. "She burned with a huge desire to play. You just couldn't get her off the court," said Martina Ivanova, who coached her for two years. "We're all very proud that such a great athlete grew up on these very courts," Mukhammedzhanova added.



THE NUMBERS GAME

- 110 Martina Hingis is, at 16, the youngest women's finalist in 110 years.
- 3 Pete Sampras saved the only three break points against him in his quarter-final yesterday.
- 18 The number of aces served by Britain's Greg Rusedski in his quarter-final. He had served 109 in the previous four rounds.
- 1 The number of times Anna Kournikova held serve in her semi-final against Hingis yesterday.
- 15 Rusedski has lost just twice in his last 15 matches.
- 3 The number of unseeded players in the men's semi-finals.

TODAY'S WEATHER

Bright intervals, showers maybe thundery

Maximum temp 19C

Lake's designs on stage career

Valda Lake, the 28-year-old Devon player, is swapping tennis for another kind of set. She is retiring to concentrate on her new career as a theatre set designer in New York.

The bubbly Lake never rose to great heights on the tennis court but she had 12 years on the circuit and was good enough to play for the British Fed Cup team last year and was runner-up to Wales' Sarah Loosmore in the British National championships at Telford in 1988.

"I've been living in New York for the past two years, dabbling between tennis and set designing," she said. "But now I'm going to go full time with my design work. It's been great fun playing tennis all round the world but I guess you have to finish some time."

Certainly Valda bowed out of Wimbledon with one last bright memory. Playing with the Berkshire player, Paul Hand, she was beaten in the first

round of the mixed doubles by the South African John-Laffnie De Jager and a certain Martina Hingis.

But as she said: "It was a good way to finish, playing against the best player in the world."

□□□

Wimbledon is a time when all the former greats gather to chew the fat and Charlie Pasarell, twice a record breaker at Wimbledon, is no exception.

Pasarell, who runs the Indian Wells tournament in California and serves on the ATP Tour Council, holds two records at Wimbledon that may never be equalled.

He played an epic match against Pancho Gonzales in the 1969 championships which lasted for five hours and 12 minutes, the longest in Wimbledon history.

Two years earlier, he had beaten Manuel Santana, the Spaniard who was defending his

title, in the first round, the first and only time that the holder has been beaten in his opening match.

Pasarell, still looking very fit, said: "It seems like yesterday when I played Pancho and I still feel tired."

□□□

Firefighter Eddy Spong, of the London Fire Brigade Western Command, has been stewarding at Wimbledon for 24 years but he did not realise he might have another connection with the All England Club.

Eddy's 12-year-old daughter, Samantha, was browsing through a Wimbledon programme when she noticed an article about A E H Spong, who had won the All-England Croquet championship three years running in the 1890s.

"Samantha asked me if we were related to this fellow," Eddy said. "But I don't really

know. There are not too many Spongs about so there could be some connection."

□□□

What has been the most amusing match at Wimbledon this year? According to many on-lookers, it was a mixed doubles match in the first round.

What was good about it? On one side of the net was the American Kelly Jones, playing with the Australian Kristine Kuon, and on the other was Kelly's wife, Tami, partnered by the South African Brent Haygarth.

Kelly, a dutiful husband, never hit the ball too hard at his wife. But Tami had no such worries. She belted the ball at Kelly with all her might.

It didn't do a lot of good. Kelly and Kristine won 6-4 6-3, but they all had a good laugh, which makes a change in these days of high-powered tennis.



QUOTES OF THE DAY

■ He threw his racket and didn't get a warning. I got a warning for nothing. A peeved Nicolas Pietrangeli after his defeat yesterday.

■ The mind says: "I want to go out there and play my best," and the body says: "No! Greg Rusedski after his quarter-final defeat by Gedric Pliolite."

■ For sure, it wasn't one of my best performances. I'm going to have to improve something for Saturday... if I win the final it would be my greatest feeling. Martina Hingis after her semi-final victory.

■ I didn't come here to retire, I came here to win the championship. Michael Stich after beating Tim Henman.

RESULTS

Men's singles

Holder: R Krajcek (Neth)

Quarter-finals

M Stich (Ger) bt T Henman (GB) 6-3

6-2 6-4

P Pietrangeli (Fr) bt G Rusedski (GB) 6-4

4-6 6-4 6-3

P Sampras (US) bt B Becker (Ger) 6-1

6-7 6-1 6-4

T Woodbridge (Aus) bt N Kiefer (Ger) 7-6

2-6 6-4 6-4

Women's singles

Holder: S Graf (Ger)

Semi-finals

M Hingis (Svi) bt A Kournikova (Rus) 6-3

6-2

J Kournikova (Cz Rep) bt A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) 6-4

6-2

Men's doubles

Holder: M Woodbridge and T Woodbridge (Aus)

Quarter-finals

W Black (Zim) and J Grubb (US) bt D Johnson and F Montana (US) 6-4

6-3 6-2

M Davina and P Vezner (Cz Rep) bt N Broad (GB) and P Norwalk (SA) 4-6

4-6 6-4 6-4

Women's doubles

Holder: H Sukovic (Cz Rep) and M Hingis (Svi)

Third round

L Neiland (Lat) and H Sukovic (Cz Rep) bt N Taudert (Fr) and L Wild (US) 6-4

6-4

N Arendt (US) and M Bollegraf (Neth) bt N Kuimuta and N Miyagi (Jpn) 6-2

3-6 6-1

Mixed doubles

Holder: C Suk and C Sukovic (Cz Rep)

First round

M Petchey and C Wood (GB) bt E Sanchez and A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) 4-6

4-6

J O'Connell and C Rubin (US) bt M Jagan (US) and S Schütz-McCarthy (Neth) 7-5

6-7 6-1

Second round

T Nielsen (Neth) and V Savard (Ind) bt M Neil and G Higginson (Neth) 6-3

6-4

A O'Connell (Rus) and L Neiland (Lat) bt P Nyberg and A Carlson (Swe) 7-5

6-3

Third round

A O'Connell (Rus) and L Neiland (Lat) bt P Nyberg (Aus) and T Kozum (Sloven) 6-2

7-6

Armstrong and Shales win final

Gerry Armstrong and Jeremy Shales, two of the longest-serving umpires at Wimbledon, will be in charge of the two singles finals this year.

Armstrong, from East Dean, Sussex, will umpire the men's singles final, scheduled for Sunday, while Shales, from Teddington, Middlesex, will umpire tomorrow's women's singles.

It will be Armstrong's second men's singles final, for he was also in charge of the 1988 final between Stefan Edberg and Boris Becker.

Shales, who has been umpiring at Wimbledon since 1960, first took a women's singles final in 1978 when Martina Navratilova won the first of her nine victories by beating Chris Evert.

□□□

Bobby Wilson, who reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon four times between 1958 and 1963 is honest enough to admit that the general standard of play today is far higher than in his day.

But the former British Davis Cup player thinks today's professionals have a much easier life than when he was striving to reach the top.

"Nowadays, the players run their own tour and can go anywhere, do anything and are entirely independent," he said. "In my day, the national associations ruled the roost and we were like you if you stepped out of line. You only went abroad with permission from your national association and did as you were told."

□□□

A conversation overheard in the Press Association Centre Court gallery today:

A man walked in, looked round and said: "I've come here because someone wants to do an interview with Pat Cash?"

The steward in charge, firefighter Bobby Gorman of the London Fire Brigade Western Command, replied: "You want to do an interview with Pat Cash?"

The man staggered back and said: "I am Pat Cash." The result: no interview.

Game set and watch.

ROLEX

OFFICIAL TIMEKEEPER TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS, WIMBLEDON

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 2/7/97. The winning numbers: 6, 10, 18, 22, 41, 45. Bonus number: 28.

Total Sales: £38,092,277. Prize Fund: £26,059,286 (45% of ticket sales plus £8,917,762 from Saturday's rollover jackpot).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	2	£7,189,482	£14,378,924
Match 5 plus bonus ball	28	£60,012	£1,680,336
Match 5	523	£1,137	£594,451
Match 4	37,850	£61	£2,308,950
Match 3	663,929	£10	£6,639,290
TOTALS	702,732		£26,056,851

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In the event of any discrepancy in the above, the data contained in Camelot's central computer system shall prevail.

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Seeded players in CAPITALS



Headley hurtles in
Derek Pringle on England's
latest Test success, page 31

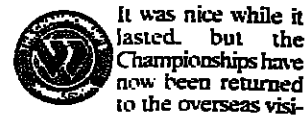
sport

Back seat Seve
Andy Farrell at the Irish
Open, page 28

WIMBLEDON '97: Henman and Rusedski fail to keep the flag flying as Stich and Pioline put a dampener on No 1 Court

Britain's day of broken dreams

JOHN ROBERTS
Tennis Correspondent



It was nice while it lasted, but the Championships have now been returned to the overseas visitors.

Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski tried as hard as they could in the circumstances, but both were outplayed by superior opponents on the day. So ended Britain's dream of two men duelling in the semi-finals, one of whom would have advanced to the final for the first time since Bunny Austin met Donald Budge in 1938.

Rusedski, the Canadian-born British No 2, was unable to produce the consistency of serve or the efficiency of return to make a dent in the confidence of Cedric Pioline. The Frenchman won 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in two hours precisely and will now meet Michael Stich, the 1991 champion.

The German required only an hour and 28 minutes to outclass Henman 6-3, 6-2, 6-4. Henman, in common with Rusedski, was unable to rely on the efficiency of his serving, and Stich gained in confidence with virtually every winning shot. Henman said, "It was probably the worst experience of my life on a tennis court."

Henman's defeat means that there will be at least one unseeded finalist again. The 22-year-old from Oxford, seeded No 14, experienced the misfortune of playing Stich when the 28-year-old German was in the mood and physical condition to make a mockery of his ranking of No 88 in the world.

Stich has announced that he will retire from Grand Slam tennis after Wimbledon, a decision taken because of a degenerative shoulder injury and the realisation that he has done "roamin' or whatever the German equivalent is, and feels the need to



Double disappointment: Britain's Tim Henman waves to the crowd on No. 1 Court after following Greg Rusedski (right) out of the tournament

Photographs: David Ashdown

sample life away from the tour. He arrived at the All England Club far from pleased with his season and determined to leave on as high a note as possible. Having exceeded most people's expectations, he now has the drive to fulfil his own by bidding *au revoir* on the Centre Court on Sunday, with or without the trophy in his hands.

Stich, it may be remembered, was the triumphant rain man of 1991 when the All England Club experienced its worst soaking until the past week or so. He defeated Stefan Edberg in three tie-break sets in the

semi-finals and overpowered his illustrious compatriot, Boris Becker, in a final blessed with glorious sunshine.

Often lugubrious on the court, sometimes to the point of wearing the look of the chief mourner at his own funeral, Stich allowed himself a broad smile at the end of yesterday's performance, he raised his arms to his sparse but vociferous supporters and then tapped his racket in appreciation of the generous applause from the majority of the 11,000 who had come to the new No 1 Court in the hope of hailing British suc-

cess. Stich was even moved to toss his two Wimbledon towels into the crowd, making the odd cynic or two wonder if he had a couple of pals who would come to place them on seats for today's matches.

Henman at this point had had enough of the proceedings. He did not wait for his opponent but walked off the court alone, sparing a modest wave for the thousands who still chanted his name.

Henman's match had barely started when the rain came to send the players back to the locker rooms for two hours and 43 minutes. Having been unable to take advantage of a break point, the Briton at least had the encouragement of knowing that he could attack the German's serve. When the players returned, however, Stich immediately put pressure on Henman's serve, and although this was saved the pattern of an all-to-brief contest was set: Stich on the offensive, Henman struggling to staunch the flow of points.

Such was the strain of trying



YESTERDAY AT WIMBLEDON

to outwit his opponents that Henman began to feed Stich with double faults. He hit six in 15 serves in the concluding stages of the opening set, three of them in being broken to 5-3. The last of these may have startled even Stich, so far off the mark was Henman with both serves on the third break point of the game.

The German lost only one more point in serving out the set after 31 minutes. He then took advantage of Henman's seventh

double fault to break for 2-1 in the second set, luring his opponent into hitting a back hand over the baseline by returning a second serve.

Henman had an opportunity to break back immediately when Stich double-faulted in the next game, but the German swept away the error with a stylish serve and forehand volley, leaving Henman to pick up his own serving errors where he had left off, hitting two more double faults to go 14-1 in arrears.

After taking a two sets to love lead with only an hour played, Stich did not allow Henman a point on his serve until the eighth game of the third set. The Briton salvaged one, and the other was a double fault. By this time Stich could afford to be generous.

Rusedski, whose lower back had troubled him on Saturday, said he felt no physical pain during yesterday's match with Pioline, but admitted to fatigue after a run of impressive form which has lasted through the tournaments at Queen's and Nottingham and enabled him to produce some of the best serve and volleying of his career until yesterday.

Two double faults in losing the opening game did nothing to steady Rusedski's nerve and Pioline, one of the finest returners of serve on the tour, settled into an exhibition of his all-round court craft.

He won the first set in only 26 minutes and quickly recovered after losing the second set. What-



ever gains Rusedski imagined he had made, he was swiftly disabused when the Frenchman picked up his game and began to hit breathtaking passing shots, many of them when returning Rusedski's serves, which began to look less fearsome by the minute.

Pioline, by contrast, allowed Rusedski only three points off his serve in the fourth set, striding into the semi-finals by breaking the Briton with a backhand return, leaving Rusedski to shake his head in disappointment.

Hinges through to final. Results, page 30

Disappointment for the out crowd

No 1 Court proved an empty, deflating experience for two Britons yesterday, writes **Richard Edmondson**

The stock exchange for today's Wimbledon tickets suffered a Black Thursday when things did not go exactly to plan in yesterday's quarter-finals. Cedric Pioline and Michael Stich advanced, at the same time sending a wrecking ball through the dream semi. Greg and Tim are out.

It will be of some consolation to Greg Rusedski that something happened to the crowd on the way to the forum and his humbling at the hands of a Frenchman was not widely observed.

You would have had to be buried alive for the last fortnight to miss this day as a rare moment of sporting significance in the British sporting calendar, yet, at 11 o'clock, the people's army (officer division) appeared in the presence of the one-man monsoon season that is Cliff Richard, Rusedski lost the first point to a forehand passing shot from Pioline. There was no way back from there.

This, he assured us, did not contribute to his 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 defeat. "I wasn't disap-

pointed with the crowd," he said. "The people that came to watch were tremendous and supportive and trying to get me going. I'm just disappointed I couldn't give them something to cheer about at the end of the day."

That day dawned with ominous portents for Rusedski in his morning newspaper. Firstly there seemed to be unequivocal thought that he was on his way to an all-British semi-final. Then there was mention of an Australian cricketer appearing at Old Trafford, a certain Greg Blewett.

Under filthy skies and in the presence of the one-man monsoon season that is Cliff Richard, Rusedski lost the first point to a forehand passing shot from Pioline. There was no way back from there.

The Briton, who was wearing voluminous basketball pants, lost that game and in all honesty failed to find a foothold in the match. Greg is the post-decimal Roscoe Tanner, a left-arm swinger with little more than a huge service in the arsenal. If he could play himself you would be assured of a very short match indeed.

On this occasion the howlers were erratic and the returns a misnomer. This meant a first set barren in terms of continuity. There are more rallies from Paris to Dakar than there were in the opening cycle.

However, Greg has at least developed a strange intimacy with his towel this fortnight, a relationship which makes him the Linus of the greensward. Wiping his face is not a functional act, it is more a nervous

tic on important points. He tried another system yesterday involving repeated change of the headband. That did not work either and you knew the game was up when he asked if his opponent was using new balls just after he had seen them rolled out of the canister for his service game.

There was more tennis in the first game of Henman's match with Stich, but then rain drove the players off court for over two and a half hours. It seems they were drinking bottles of pop during the suspension as both had to leave the arena again after play resumed.

Stich emerged with two strands of cotton drooping from his shorts. Detailed inspection revealed these to be his legs. On a bad day, the German can believe they only hold G7 summits

to invent ways of doing him down, and if moaning was a test of merit he would be an Olympian.

Stich, however, has been liberated by his decision to retire and Wimbledon will be his last Grand Slam tournament. The 1991 champion has a degenerative shoulder injury and has also become tired with the grind of travelling. On yesterday's showing there will be few in the locker room offering a lift to entice him back on the circuit.

By the time of the second session most of the ticket-holders had been disinterested and they witnessed the unusual sight of Henman becoming increasingly traumatised. Having unscrewed his effervescence against Richard Krajicek in the previous round our man had forgotten to put the cap back on overnight. He was flat. Henman was distracted, vocally self-critical and eventually driven to thrashing a bag with his racket.

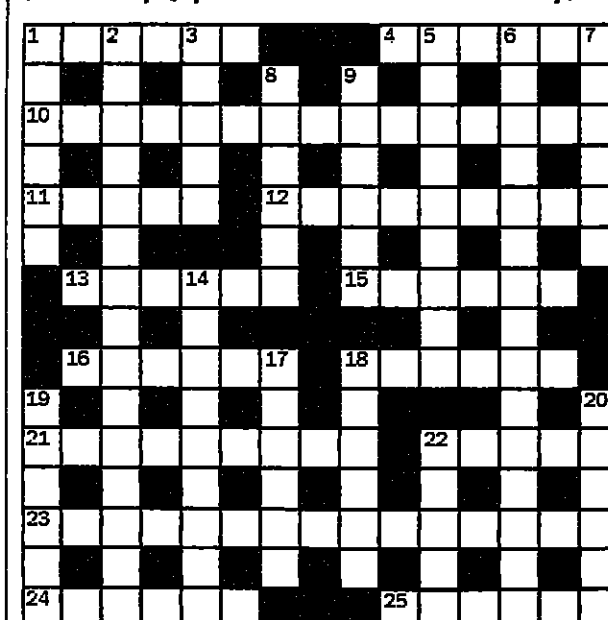
The British No1 described it as the worst day of his tennis life, and he was almost as upset as the pavement touts left with sheaves of tickets for the nightmare semi-finals.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3342, Friday 4 July

By Mass

Thursday's solution



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ACROSS

- 1 Fourth of courses in set meal (6)
- 4 Financier's gambling hope (6)
- 10 "High Noon" - and how it was greeted? (3,2,3,7)
- 11 Modern partygoers losing head in States (5)
- 12 In short spell eccentric has house-trained elephant (9)
- 13 Agree with Party (on trade) (6)
- 15 Girl from Italy jammed in English byway (6)
- 16 Lean after very large port (6)
- 18 Songs of praise from past ages, vocalised (6)

DOWN

- 1 Little girl? Boy? This is the way to tell! (6)
- 2 A French gathering without group of Deputies is undistinguished (15)
- 3 Hits, these bands (5)

Across

- 5 One turned up metal tool in conveyance (9)
- 6 Part origins of New Jersey? (8-7)
- 7 See mounting storm, way out (6)
- 8 Always ready to talk about Henrietta (6)
- 9 Mixed spirit with flowing water up North (6)
- 14 Here, HM is host (9)
- 17 Changing one's colours - reportedly going West (6)
- 18 Deposits making bark curl and go wrong (4,2)
- 19 Gap for Union Canal, after blasting (6)
- 20 He keeps on giving check with Queen (6)
- 22 Boy on home turn in game (5)



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PICKING UP THE SILVERWARE
TOMORROW.



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